

FAMILIES AND THE 1951 NEW ZEALAND WATERFRONT LOCKOUT

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Dedication

Since I started this thesis in 2009, I have read far more than I expected to about the families of waterside workers, freezing workers and miners. While I have written this thesis, Auckland waterside workers have been locked out, freezing workers have been on strike and Timaru waterside workers were made redundant. On 19 November 2010, 29 miners were killed in an explosion in Pike River mine near Greymouth.

This thesis is dedicated to the workers, families and communities affected by those events, and acknowledges the on-going ties between the workplaces studied in this thesis and the homes around them.

Acknowledgements

Woody Guthrie is quoted as having said: “When I think back through my life to everybody that I owe, I mean the ones I can remember. Of course I know that I owe these folks, and that they owe some other folks, these are in debt to others, and all of us owe everybody. The amount that we owe is all that we have.”¹ Coming to the end of this thesis, I am aware that it is woven together from debts.

My first set of debts is to those who saved and recorded the history of 1951. This thesis would not be possible without the pack rats of the New Zealand labour movement, particularly Herbert Roth, who held union papers and files in their homes for decades. I also want to acknowledge their families, who were often the ones who transferred what had been saved to libraries and archives.

1951 has a rich oral history base, because dozens of people have taken the time to record their memories of 1951. I owe a debt of gratitude to both the interviewers and the interviewees. Gerry Evans recorded wonderful interviews before his death, I would like to acknowledge him and thank his widow, Caroline Evans for allowing me access to these interviews. Anna Green was incredibly generous with her interviews. Finally, I want to particularly thank those that took the time to talk to me.

More uncomfortably, I would like to acknowledge my debt to the Security Intelligence Service, without their careful maintenance of the police files of 1951, and their release of those files in 2008, this thesis would be much weaker.

All the material in the world means nothing if you cannot access it and I owe so much to librarians around the country, who have without fail been amazing and informative and supportive.

My second set of debts is to those who supported me through over the last four years. The feedback and support of my supervisors Charlotte Macdonald, Jim McAloon and Kate Hunter was invaluable. The Victoria University History programme has been an

¹ *Til We Outnumber 'Em*, Righteous Babe, 2000.

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I also received crucial financial support from Victoria University. I received a summer research scholarship in 2009 and a finishing scholarship in 2012. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences provided grants that enabled me to complete research outside of Wellington.

The final debts that I carry are debts of experience. I first became interested in the material aspects of the dispute during the 2006 Progressive lockout, when I spent long hours collecting money in red buckets, and sorting coins and notes to count it. This thesis owes a huge debt to that month, and everyone who was involved.

On October 15 2007, the police raided homes across the country, and targeted Ruatoki. Over the year that followed, I saw and experienced the personal and intimate effects of those events on families and communities. I want to acknowledge the importance of that time, and the people who were part of it.

I have so many more debts and so many people that I owe. I just want to acknowledge my family, blood and chosen. Writing a thesis can seem like a solitary activity, but for me it has been an experience intertwined with the people I know and love as well as many I have never met.

Abstract

From February to July 1951, 8,000 New Zealand watersider workers were locked-out and 7,000 miners, seamen and freezing workers went on strike in support. These workers and those who were dependent on their income, had to survive without wages for five months. The dispute was a family event as well as an industrial event. The men were fathers, husbands, brothers and sons, and their lack of wages affected the family that they lived with and their wider kin networks. The thesis examines families in order to write a gendered social history of the 1951 waterfront dispute.

The discussion starts by exploring the relationship between waterfront work and watersiders' families before the lockout. Then it turns to examine the material support that families received and the survival strategies used during the dispute. It examines the decisions union branches made about relief and other activities through the lens of gender and explores the implications of those decisions for family members. The subsequent chapters examine the dispute's end and long-term costs on families. The study draws on a mixture of union material, state archives and oral sources. The defeat of the union has meant that union material has largely survived in personal collections, but the state's active involvement in the dispute generated significant records. The oral history of 1951 is rich; this thesis draws on over fifty existing oral history interviews with people involved in the dispute, and twenty interviews completed for this project.

The thesis both complicates and confirms existing understandings of 1950s New Zealand. It complicates the idea of a prosperous conformist society, while confirming and deepening our understanding of the role of the family and gender relationships in the period. It argues that union branches put considerable effort into maintaining the gender order during the dispute and set up relief as a simulacrum of the breadwinner wage. Centring workers' families opens the dispute outwards to the communities they were part of. Compared to previous historical accounts, the thesis describes a messier and less contained 1951 waterfront dispute. This study shows that homes were a site of the dispute. The domestic work of ensuring that a family managed without wages was largely women's and was as much part of the dispute as collective union work, which was often organised to exclude women. The thesis argues that homes and families were the sharp edges of the 1951 waterfront dispute, the site of both its costs and crises.

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List of Abbreviations

Alexander Turnbull Library	ATL
Alexander Turnbull Library, Oral History Centre	ATL-OHC
Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Office	ANZ-DO
Archives New Zealand, Wellington Office	ANZ-WO
Auckland University Library	AUL
Hocken Library	HL
McMillan Brown Library	MBL
New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union	NZWWU
Presbyterian Archives Research Centre	PARC
State Advances Corporation	SAC
Security Intelligence Service	SIS
Waterfront Industry Commission	WIC

Introduction

Baden Norris was one of 8,000 waterside workers who were locked out from February to July 1951. Norris dedicated his history of Lyttelton waterfront workers to the women of the 1951 lockout: “those long-suffering but uncomplaining housekeepers who somehow managed to keep the families fed and clothed without any income for five months.”¹ Despite the emphasis he put on feeding and clothing families in his dedication, Norris spent less than a page discussing relief efforts during the dispute, and did not attempt to uncover that “somehow”.² He placed the responsibility of organising the family economy beyond history, by putting it in his dedication.

The 1951 waterfront lockout, and supporting strikes, lasted five months. How did families survive without wages? “Somehow” should not be enough of an answer for historians. At its core, an extended industrial dispute is a war of attrition over who can last longer: employers without their normal workforce or workers without their wages. The ability of workers to continue with an industrial dispute is dependent on the daily domestic work, usually done by women, of providing food, clothes and shelter. The central question of this thesis is: how did families survive during the 1951 waterfront lockout? Looking at the family economy brings women’s work out of the margins of the discussion of 1951, and into the main picture. Answering this question does not just mean focusing on the uncomplaining housekeepers that Norris mentioned (or even the ones who complained); studying the family economy requires exploring the lives of women and men and children within their families.

The 1951 waterfront lockout began, in February 1951, as a dispute between ship-owners and watersiders over wages. Prime Minister Sidney Holland’s National government took control of the dispute, seeing an opportunity to destroy the New Zealand Waterside Workers Union (NZWWU), which was a militant union in a key sector of the economy. Seamen, freezing workers and coal miners went on supporting strike; altogether over 15,000 workers were locked out or on supporting strike for five

¹ Baden Norris, *United to Protect: A History of the Struggles of Lyttelton Waterfront Workers as They Attempted to Achieve Social and Economic Justice from the First Days of the Canterbury Settlement*, Christchurch, 1984, p.2.

² *ibid.*, p.150.

months.³ Two hundred freezing workers were women; the rest of the locked-out and striking workers were men. The dispute ended in July 1951: an absolute defeat for the union and victory for the government. Sidney Holland called a snap election in September 1951. He fought on his record during the lockout, and was returned to government with an increased majority.

More has been written about the 1951 lockout and supporting strikes than about any other New Zealand industrial dispute.⁴ In 1952, the NZWWU published Dick Scott's *151 Days*, the first history of the 1951 lockout.⁵ Dick Scott was the editor of the NZWWU magazine, *Transport Worker* and had been deeply involved in union propaganda in Wellington in 1951.⁶ In 1961, Michael Bassett completed an MA thesis at the University of Auckland on the 1951 waterfront dispute. In 1972, the year that Bassett was elected to parliament as a member of the Labour Party, a revised version of his thesis was published as a book: *Confrontation '51*.⁷ Bassett focused on the origins of the dispute in the immediate post-war period and the personalities of those involved. He was particularly interested in the political context and argued that the eventual effect of the dispute was to cement the National Party as the natural party of government in New Zealand after 1949. In the 1960s and 1970s, studies of individual unions and post-graduate work on specific aspects of the dispute filled in the historical picture.⁸ However, until the late 1990s Bassett's and Scott's works were the only widely available histories of the dispute. Neither discusses in any depth how people survived without wages, although Scott does describe relief efforts.

³ Department of Labour, Strike Return summary, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, Archives New Zealand Wellington Office (ANZ-WO).

⁴ Melanie Nolan, "The Women Were Bloody Marvellous": 1951, Gender and New Zealand Industrial Relations', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 16, 2003, p.120.

⁵ Dick Scott, *151 Days: History of the Great Waterfront Lockout and Supporting Strikes, February 15-July 15, 1951*, 50th Anniversary Facsimile Edition, Auckland, 2001.

⁶ Dick Scott, *A Radical Writer's Life*, Auckland, 2004, pp.141-7.

⁷ Michael Bassett, *Confrontation '51: The 1951 Waterfront Dispute*, Wellington, 1972.

⁸ Conrad Bollinger, *Against the Wind: The Story of the New Zealand Seamen's Union*, Wellington, 1968; Rob Campbell, *The Only Weapon, Prepared & Written for the 75th Anniversary of the Wellington Drivers' Union*, Auckland, 1975; B. Fernandez, 'Trade Union Policy and Practice in the New Zealand Waterfront Industry', MComm thesis, University of Otago, 1969; Christine Meade, 'New Zealand Waterfront Unions, 1951-1967: A Study of the Repercussions of the 1951 Strike on the Wharf Unionists, and of Union Organisation from the Defeat of the N.Z.W.W.U. until the Formation of the New Zealand Federation of Watersiders', MA thesis, University of Otago, 1980; Sherwood Young, 'The Activities and Problems of the Police in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1975.

Until the late 1980s, the history of 1951 was political and industrial, and therefore focused on those in leadership positions.⁹ The playwright Renée, whose uncle was a locked-out watersider, was interested in women's experiences of the dispute. She talked to two unionists who told her: "The women were marvellous, absolutely marvellous!"¹⁰ Renée continued her account of the conversation: "When I pressed for details they said, 'Oh, they were really marvellous, we couldn't have managed without them.' The bell went for us to go into the theatre, and they moved quickly and thankfully away".¹¹ The 1987 play that resulted from these questions, *Pass It On*, was the first account of 1951 to address women's experiences.¹² Discussing the literature of the dispute, Clare Matthewson argued, in 1986, that fiction about 1951: "attempts to tell [...] a story, not of people like Sidney Holland, Jock Barnes, Fintan Walsh or of other varieties of 'hero', but of people too small for annals of recorded history".¹³ Matthewson was accurate in stating that the history of 1951, as it stood in 1986, did leave many people out; this thesis explores the lives of people that Matthewson argued were too small for recorded history.

The history written about 1951 in the late 1980s was different from history that had been written earlier. In 1989, Anna Green completed her PhD thesis, which covered the social history of waterfront work in New Zealand from 1915-1951. She published articles and eventually a book from this research.¹⁴ The same year Andrea Hotere wrote an Honours research essay on the lockout in Port Chalmers, which discussed how families survived during the dispute in more detail than any work before or since.¹⁵ In 1991 Murray Tom, Kerry Taylor, Joe Tepania and Nora Rameka wrote about Māori in

⁹ Although some work done earlier had touched on people's experiences of 1951 that was not its focus. Wayne Townsend, 'From Bureau to Lockout: Lyttelton Waterside Workers 1920s to 1951', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1985; Young, 'The Activities and Problems of the Police in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute'.

¹⁰ Renée, 'The Women: They Were Bloody Marvellous!' in *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, David Grant, ed., Christchurch, 2004, p.46. Renée is her full name.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Renée, *Pass It On*, Wellington, 1987.

¹³ Clare Matthewson, 'From Subject to Device, History as Myth in Action: The Evolution of Event from Mythic Processes as Revealed in Waterfront Dispute Fiction', PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1986, pp.1-2.

¹⁴ Anna Green, 'The 'Double-Edged Sword': Nicknames on the Waterfront, 1915-1951,' in *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, John Martin and Kerry Taylor, eds, Palmerston North, 1991; Anna Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915-1951*, Dunedin, 2001.

¹⁵ Andrea Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', BA(Hons) thesis, University of Otago, 1989.

the trade union movement and touched on 1951.¹⁶ However, in the 1990s, more biographical material about 1951 was published.¹⁷ This biographical approach reinforced the emphasis on individuals of earlier work, like Bassett's.

In 2001, the fiftieth anniversary, the dispute received significant attention: a conference, three bibliographical projects, a documentary, and in depth magazine articles.¹⁸ In 2004, *The Big Blue* was published; this book brought together the academic work and personal accounts of the dispute from the Trade Union History Project's fiftieth anniversary seminar.¹⁹ In his introduction to *The Big Blue*, David Grant observed: "a striking lack of understanding of the events from the participants' viewpoints in particular".²⁰ *The Big Blue* deepened the history of women in the dispute, with personal accounts from four women, a discussion of the Auckland Women's Auxiliary and a longer article about women's role in the dispute.²¹ Melanie Nolan wrote about women's experiences in the dispute in a journal article in 2003, as well as a chapter in *The Big Blue*.²² In her article, Nolan argued that the dispute changed gender relations by weakening the case for the male breadwinner wage.²³ Nolan's work, along with the other accounts in *The Big Blue*,

¹⁶ Tom Murray, Kerry Taylor, Joe Tepania, and Nora Rameka, 'Towards a History of Maori and Trade Unions,' in *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, John Martin and Kerry Taylor, eds, Palmerston North, 1991. Taylor developed this work further on his chapter on Māori and the Communist party: Kerry Taylor, "'Potential Allies of the Working Class': The Communist Party of New Zealand and Maori, 1921-1951," in *On the Left: Essays on Socialism in New Zealand*, Pat Moloney and Kerry Taylor, eds, Dunedin, 2002.

¹⁷ Tom Bramble, ed., *Never a White Flag: The Memoirs of Jock Barnes*, Wellington, 1998; Judith Fyfe, *Matriarchs: A Generation of New Zealand Women Talk to Judith Fyfe*, Auckland, 1990; Dean Parker and Francis Wevers, *Shattered Dreams*, Trade Union History Project, 1990; Marcia Spencer, *The Incoming Tide: Sir William Sullivan and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute*, Wellington, 1998.

¹⁸ John Bates, *1951*, Bates Productions, 2001; Leo Clayton, 'An Annotated Bibliography of the 1951 Waterfront Dispute in Wellington', MLIS thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2001; Andrew David Cooper, 'The 1951 Waterfront Dispute in Canterbury: A Select Annotated Bibliography', MLIS thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2001; Ian Dixon, 'The 1951 Waterside Strike – an Untold Story', *NZine*, 2001, available at: http://www.nzine.co.nz/features/waterside_strike.html, accessed 27 August 2011; Gerry Evans, 'The Big Blue', *Listener*, 17 February 2001; Glenda Northey, 'Is No News Good News?: The Effects of Restrictive Government Measures on Representations of Watersiders During the 1951 Waterfront Dispute, Particularly within the Auckland Region: A Bibliography', MLIS thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2001; Dean Parker, '1951: A View from the Embassy', *Listener*, 10 February 2001.

¹⁹ David Grant, ed., *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, Christchurch, 2004.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p.8.

²¹ Rona Bailey, 'Telling the World 'the Other Side of the Story''; Judith Fyfe, 'Fuzz Barnes: A Personal Reminiscence'; Sandra Lee, 'All in the Family'; Melanie Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams About Women in the Lockout'; Kathryn Parsons, 'The Women's Waterfront Auxiliary'; Renée, 'The Women: They Were Bloody Marvellous!' in *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, David Grant, ed., Christchurch, 2004.

²² Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams'.

²³ Nolan, "'The Women Were Bloody Marvellous'".

established that some women did political work, but did not expand on the family economy much beyond Baden Norris's statement that 'somehow' families survived.²⁴

Studying the family economy during a dispute offers a way to integrate women's experiences into the history of industrial disputes. Since the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s, feminist historians have been attempting to place women within the text of this history. In a 1975 special issue of *Labour History*, Ann Curthoys clearly laid out the political importance of uncovering the history of Australian women and work.²⁵ In the same issue Winifred Mitchell explored women's roles in Australian coal strikes.²⁶ In the 1970s and early 1980s, feminist labour historians, like feminist historians in other areas, began to try and fill in what were then massive gaps.

In the 1980s, contemporary industrial disputes changed the way feminist historians wrote about women and industrial action. In March 1984, British miners went out on strike; they remained out for the rest of the year and into 1985. This long, bitter strike changed the way historians studied strikes and lockouts. Throughout coal-mining communities, the wives and girlfriends of miners formed activist groups. These groups were transformative for many involved; women organised together, undertook public speaking, and had their confidence and their views about women's gender roles changed by these experiences. The women involved and their political sympathisers put a lot of value on these experiences, and prioritised recording them.²⁷ While the British miners' strike was the most prominent strike of this period, those who were interested in women's roles in other strikes found similar experiences. The novelist Barbara Kingsolver's first book was a non-fiction account of women's activism in the 1983-1986 copper strike in Arizona. She described very similar experiences to those documented in British mining communities; in particular, that women's activism was necessary for the strike, and that for women involved the experience transformed their political

²⁴ Cybèle Locke also discussed union activists during 1951 in her recent work, Cybèle Locke, *Workers in the Margins: Union Radicals in Post-War New Zealand*, Wellington, 2012.

²⁵ Ann Curthoys, 'Towards a Feminist Labour History', *Labour History*, 29, 1975.

²⁶ Winifred Mitchell, 'Wives of the Radical Labour Movement', *Labour History*, 29, 1975.

²⁷ Jackie Keating, *Counting the Cost: A Family in the Miners' Strike*, Barnsley, 1991; Loretta Loach, 'We'll Be Here Right to the End and After: Women in the Miners' Strike,' in *Digging Deeper: Issues in the Miners' Strike*, Huw Beynon, ed., London, 1985; Jill Miller, *You Can't Kill the Spirit: Women in a Welsh Mining Village*, London, 1986; Sheila Rowbotham and Jean McCrindle, 'More Than Just a Memory: Some Political Implications of Women's Involvement in the Miners' Strike, 1984-85', *Feminist Review*, 23, 1986; Chrys Salt and Jim Layzell, *Here We Go!: Women's Memories of the 1984/85 Miners' Strike*, London, 1986; Jean Stead, *Never the Same Again: Women and the Miners' Strike*, London, 1987; Joan Witham, *Hearts and Minds: The Story of the Women of Nottinghamshire in the Miners' Strike, 1984-1985*, London, 1986.

viewpoint.²⁸ Kingsolver, like many of those who documented the experiences of women in the British miners' strike, was motivated at least in part by her involvement in the Women's Liberation Movement.²⁹ Did the existence of a vibrant feminist movement contribute to the prominent roles women took in strikes in the 1980s and the changing consciousness of that involvement?³⁰ Or had women been participating in strikes in this way for decades, but no-one had written about it?

The British miners' strike cast a long shadow, and many studies of women and industrial action in male-dominated industries have explicitly or implicitly searched for parallels. Sometimes they have found them: Marjorie Lasky found a very active auxiliary in her study of 1930s Teamsters in the United States.³¹ Not surprisingly, the connection is strongest in histories of British miners. Sue Bruley ended her article about the 1926 miners lockout with a discussion of what would happen 60 years later: "Collective kitchens had a potentially liberating force for women, but this power could not be realised because during the Lockout, class had to take precedence, which left no space for gender politics. Almost sixty years later, in the 1984–85 miners' dispute, some mining women did challenge gender divisions".³² Scholars from much further afield have also been influenced by histories of the British miners' strike. Melanie Nolan used what others have written about the 1984–5 miners' strike as a starting point for understanding women's role in 1951.³³ The powerful model of the 1984–5 British

²⁸ Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983*, Ithaca, 1996. Judy Aulette and Trudy Mills wrote an article about this strike that covers very similar ground to Kingsolver's book, Judy Aulette and Trudy Mills, 'Something Old, Something New: Auxiliary Work in the 1983–1986 Copper Strike', *Feminist Studies*, 14, 2, 1988.

²⁹ Lynn Beaton, *Shifting Horizons*, London, 1985; Kingsolver, *Holding the Line*; Miller, *You Can't Kill the Spirit*; Rowbotham and McCrindle, 'More Than Just a Memory'.

³⁰ This interpretation of the Women Against Pit Closures groups has since been challenged by historians who emphasise the previous political activities and awareness of those involved in the groups, Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, "'Side by Side with Our Men?' Women's Activism, Community, and Gender in the 1984–1985 British Miners' Strike', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 75, 1, 2009. However, the contemporary interpretation of women's experiences in the 1984–5 miner's strike is what made such an impact on the historiography.

³¹ Meg Luxton, 'From Ladies Auxiliaries to Wives' Committees: Housewives and the Unions,' in *Through the Kitchen Window: The Politics of Home and Family*, Meg Luxton and Harriet Rosenberg, eds, Toronto, 1986. See also Marjorie Lasky, "'Where I Was a Person': The Ladies' Auxiliary in the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters' Strikes,' in *Women, Work & Protest: A Century of U.S. Labor History*, Ruth Milkman, ed., New York, 1985.

³² Sue Bruley, 'The Politics of Food: Gender, Family, Community and Collective Feeding in South Wales in the General Strike and Miners' Lockout of 1926', *Twentieth Century British History*, 18, 1, 2007, p.76. Griselda Carr opened her book with a discussion of the 1984–5 miners' strike: Griselda Carr, *Pit Women: Coal Communities in Northern England in the Early Twentieth Century*, London, 2001, p.1.

³³ Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams', pp.60–1.

miners' strike encouraged historians studying industrial disputes to examine women's organisations and to study their experiences separately from men's.

History inspired by the British miners' strike of 1984-5 has been fruitful, but has tended to explore women's experiences through questions about traditional gender roles and to place most value on experiences which challenged those roles. Steffan Morgan's analysis of soup kitchens during that strike demonstrated this: "In many ways the strike could not have continued without the food kitchens, however it is important to stress that the support group members were initially participating within the confines of established gender definitions."³⁴ Ruth Milkman's introduction to Lasky's chapter about the Minneapolis Teamsters' Ladies Auxiliary distinguished between auxiliary work that fitted with traditional gender roles and auxiliary work that challenged them, in a way that prioritised the latter.³⁵ In a 2007 research paper on a sit-down strike in Australia in 1952, Georgina Murray and David Peetz stated: "The research question we asked was whether in industrial disputes these activists, mining women, were passive supporters of an agenda set by men, or whether they initiated and defined their own forms of resistance?"³⁶ This emphasis showed little interest in studying women who did support an agenda set by men, or whose support of strikes and lockouts was entirely within traditional gender roles. By celebrating women who take new roles during strikes and lockouts, historians have continued the marginalisation of women's domestic work.

Theoretical development in the analysis of gender was the second important influence on the way feminist historians studied industrial disputes in the 1980s. The potential of analysing gender, as well as women, was an electrifying development in this period. Feminist historians who had revealed much about the world through their study of women, had become frustrated that this work had not had an impact on wider historical narratives.³⁷ Labour historians embraced this new form of analysis, writing about gender and many different aspects of working-class people's lives.³⁸ Rae Frances detailed the

³⁴ Steffan Morgan, "Stand by Your Man": Wives, Women and Feminism During the Miners' Strike, 1984-85', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh Labour History/Cylchgrawn Hanes Llafur Cymru*, 9, 2, 2005, p. 63.

³⁵ Ruth Milkman, *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of U.S. Women's Labor History*, New York, 1987, p.181.

³⁶ Georgina Murray and David Peetz, 'Women Miners and Miners' Women: Their Activism in the 1952 Stay-Down Strike', in *Public Sociologies: Lessons and Trans-Tasman Comparisons* Auckland, 2007, p.1.

³⁷ See Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91, 5, 1986.

³⁸ Ava Baron's edited collection was an important early work: Ava Baron, *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor*, Ithaca, 1991.

breadth of the call to use gender as a category of analysis in 'Writing a Gendered Labour History'.³⁹

This challenge has been answered. Historians have demonstrated that ideas of masculinity were central to many strikes in male-dominated industries. In particular, historians have uncovered the use of discourses around masculinity to dissuade strikebreakers, and the construction of striking as a masculine activity.⁴⁰ Other historians have also looked at how women have negotiated, used, subverted, and been frustrated by discourses around femininity when they were participating in industrial action.⁴¹ Most of this work has been gender segregated; historians of the construction of gender and industrial disputes have tended to study either the role of masculinity in men's actions during a dispute, or the role of femininity in women's actions.⁴² Only when studying strikes in industries where men and women worked alongside each other have historians looked at the construction of both masculinity and femininity together.⁴³ Gendered histories of strikes have tended to be almost as gender segregated as the study of women's auxiliaries.

Much new work was done on women and industrial disputes in the 1980s, but neither studies of gender nor work inspired by the British Miners' strike led historians to study the family economy. However, in this period two historians did raise that possibility that the family economy during industrial disputes could be a fruitful line of research. Nancy

³⁹ Raelene Frances, 'Writing a Gendered Labour History,' in *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, John Martin and Kerry Taylor, eds, Palmerston North, 1991.

⁴⁰ Tapio Bergholm, 'Masculinity, Violence and Disunity: Waterfront Strikers and Strikebreakers in Finnish Ports in the 1920s and 1930s', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 8, 1, 1996; Elizabeth Faue, "'The Dynamo of Change': Gender and Solidarity in the American Labour Movement of the 1930s", *Gender and History*, 1, 2, 1989; Stephen Norwood, 'The Student as Strikebreaker: College Youth and the Crisis of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century', *Journal of Social History*, 28, 2, 1994; Sonja Rose, 'Respectable Men, Disorderly Others: The Language of Gender and the Lancashire Weavers' Strike of 1878 in Britain', *Gender and History*, 5, 3, 1993.

⁴¹ Ian Haywood, "'Never Again?": Ellen Wilkinson's Clash and the Feminization of the General Strike', *Literature and History*, 8, 1999; Jeremy Krikler, 'Women, Violence and the Rand Revolt of 1922', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3, 1996; Steve Smith, 'Class and Gender: Women's Strikes in St. Petersburg, 1895-1917 and in Shanghai, 1895-1927', *Social History*, 19, 2, 1994; Danielle Thornton, "'We Have No Redress Unless We Strike": Class, Gender and Activism in the Melbourne Tailoresses' Strike, 1882-83', *Labour History*, 96, 2009.

⁴² The exception is Joy Parr, who compared gender, work and industrial conflict between two towns one where the largest factory employed men and the other where the largest factory employed women, Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950*, Toronto, 1990.

⁴³ Mary Blewett, 'Diversities of Class and Gender Experience and the Shaping of Labor Politics: Yorkshire's Manningham Mills Strike, 1890-91 and the Independent Labour Party', *Labour History*, 47, 4, 2006; Clifford Staples and William Staples, "'A Strike of Girls": Gender and Class in the British Metal Trades, 1913', *The Journal of Historical Sociology*, 12, 2, 1999.

Hewitt suggested: “The importance of these bonds of womanhood was strikingly visible when workers walked off their jobs; the ability of a community to survive without wages was often related to women wage earners’ militancy and to the resources hoarded and distributed by non-wage earning housewives. Triumphs on the shop floor were directly tied to the tenaciousness of working-class women in keeping their families and neighbourhoods fed and functioning”.⁴⁴ Ellen Ross made a similar observation in an article about working-class respectability: “As these few glimpses of strikers’ domestic survival techniques hint, even old fashioned labor history might be expanded by more attention to the domestic life of workers.”⁴⁵

The first historian who studied the family economy during an industrial dispute in any depth was Bruce Scates. In 1991, Scates wrote about the 1890 Australasian Maritime strike, noting: “The historiography of the Maritime Strike is overwhelmingly male in its focus. [...] The blinkered nature of this historiography not only excludes women, it distorts the nature of the event. [...] The Great Strike was not just fought at the wharves or the mine sites – those public mostly male domains – but in many less visible places, the kitchens, backyards and laundries where strikers’ wives struggled to make ends meet”.⁴⁶ Scates examined a variety of ways in which families survived and struggled during the 1890 maritime strike and demonstrated the importance of the family economy in an industrial dispute. However, the historiographical aspects of his argument did not get much traction. While his article has been referenced, those that cite him acknowledged his point rather than developed it.⁴⁷

While Scates’s ideas have not been directly developed, two other historians Jan Kok and Sue Bruley have both touched on his ideas in their studies of industrial disputes. Jan Kok edited a collection that explored families’ vested interest in an industrial dispute,

⁴⁴ Nancy Hewitt, ‘Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women’s History in the 1980s’, *Social History*, 10, 3, 1985, p.308.

⁴⁵ Ellen Ross, “‘Not the Sort That Would Sit on the Doorstep’: Respectability in Pre-World War I London Neighborhoods’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 27, 1985, p.54.

⁴⁶ Bruce Scates, ‘Gender, Household and Community Politics: The 1890 Maritime Strike in Australia and New Zealand’, in *Women, Work and the Labour Movement in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Bruce Scates and Raelene Frances, eds, Sydney, 1991, p.71.

⁴⁷ Raelene Frances, Linda Kealey, and Joan Sangster, ‘Women and Wage Labour in Australia and Canada, 1880-1980’, *Labour/Le Travail*, 38, 1996, pp.71-2; Raymond Markey, ‘The Australian Place in Comparative Labour History’, *Labour History*, 100, 2011, p.178; Keir Reeves, Erik Eklund, Andrew Reeves, Bruce Scates, and Vicki Peel, ‘Broken Hill: Rethinking the Significance of the Material Culture and Intangible Heritage of the Australian Labour Movement’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 17, 4, 2011, p.307.

due to their interest in the wage levels of their members.⁴⁸ Kok's collection asked whether families were a useful framework to understand why people took industrial action and other forms of resistance. The conclusion argued that there was a limit to the explanatory power of studying families when trying to determine why people engaged in workplace collective action.⁴⁹ However, it also discussed the advantages of studying families in order to understand both men's and women's experiences.⁵⁰ The question Kok asked was a different starting point to Scates's work, and to this thesis, but Kok's work paid more attention to the family economy than other studies of industrial disputes.

The most recent historical work to examine families and industrial disputes was Sue Bruley's 2010 book *The Women and Men of 1926*. Her aim was: "to provide a gendered history of the General Strike and Miners' Lockout of 1926."⁵¹ Unlike most previous work on gender and industrial disputes she studied both women and men. The centrepiece of her argument is a discussion of collective feeding; during the 1926 lockout men were fed in miners' halls and children were fed at school.⁵² She took the relief structures that were set up to help people survive very seriously. She spent less time – seven pages – on individual family economies during the lockout.⁵³ Scates, Kok and Bruley have demonstrated the possibility of studying the family economy during industrial disputes, even if that is not the centre of Kok's and Bruley's work.

In 1926, Samuel Warren, a miner in Leicestershire, was locked-out, as were his father and three brothers: "Our life savings were a pig hanging on the wall and another one in the sty. How my mother managed for all those months I shall never know."⁵⁴ Historians of industrial disputes still often take the position of Samuel Warren, neither knowing nor asking how people survived industrial disputes. A survey of the recent literature

⁴⁸ Jan Kok, *Rebellious Families: Household Strategies and Collective Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, New York, 2002. Previous authors had touched on this idea, Ron Rothbart, "Homes Are What Any Strike Is About": Immigrant Labor and the Family Wage', *Journal of Social History*, 23, 2, 1989; Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet: Pawnbroking and Working-Class Credit*, Leicester, 1983, pp.40-1.

⁴⁹ Marcel Van der Linden, 'Conclusion,' in *Rebellious Families: Household Strategies and Collective Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Jan Kok, ed., Oxford, 2002, p.236.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.234.

⁵¹ Sue Bruley, *The Women and Men of 1926: A Social and Gender History of the General Strike and Miners' Lockout of 1926 in South Wales*, Cardiff, 2010, p.5.

⁵² *ibid.*, pp.39-59.

⁵³ *ibid.*, pp.74-80.

⁵⁴ Chris Wrigley, 'The General Strike 1926 in Local History, Part 2: The Strikers and Their Families', *The Local Historian*, 16, 2, 1984.

demonstrated the lack of attention that the questions raised in this thesis have received in most histories of industrial disputes. Since 2006, 47 articles that discussed a strike or lockout in some detail have been published in *Labour History* (Australia), *Labour/Le Travail* (Canada), *International Journal of Working Class History*, *Labor History* (America) and *Labour History Review* (Britain). There are two different ways historians addressed the question ‘how did people survive?’ The first, and more common, was by studying union relief efforts and the second was by looking at individual families. Historians rarely discussed relief committees; just thirteen of those 47 articles mentioned union relief or union funds, even in passing.⁵⁵ Judith Smart’s account of the Victorian Guild Hall’s work in support of the 1917 Melbourne Wharf Labour Strike was the only article that was focused on relief.⁵⁶ That the only discussion of relief in any depth was about a non-union organisation shows how marginalised this discussion has been.⁵⁷ The other articles that mentioned relief only did so in passing and their discussions were brief, such as: “The picketers ate donated pies and warmed themselves with donated firewood.”⁵⁸ Or, in an article where strike pay was not discussed elsewhere: “Many workers picketed more than the twenty hours per week required to receive strike pay”.⁵⁹ The origin of relief funds, how they were distributed, and their impact, has not been studied in an article on a strike or lockout in a major labour history journal in English for the last six years.

⁵⁵ David Anderson, “‘Things Are Different Down Here’: The 1955 Perfect Circle Strike, Conservative Civic Identity, and the Roots of the New Right in the 1950s Industrial Heartland”, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 74, 1, 2008; David Baker, ‘A Tale of Two Towns: Industrial Pickets, Police Practices and Judicial Review’, *Labour History*, 95, 2008; Robert Bollard, “‘The Active Chorus’: The Great Strike of 1917 in Victoria”, *Labour History*, 90, 2006; David Camfield, ‘Neoliberalism and Working-Class Resistance in British Columbia: The Hospital Employees’ Union Struggle, 2002-2004’, *Labour/Le Travail*, 57, 2006; Colin Davis, ‘The Politics of Ports: Privatization and the World’s Ports’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 71, 1, 2007; Nick Dyrenfurth, “A Terrible Monster”: From ‘Employers to Capitalists’ in the 1885-86 Melbourne Wharf Labourers’ Strike’, *Labour History*, 94, 2008; Christian Koller, ‘Local Strikes as Transnational Events: Migration, Donations, and Organizational Cooperation in the Context of Strikes in Switzerland (1860-1914)’, *Labour History Review*, 74, 3, 2009; Jeremy Milloy, ‘A Battle Royal: Service Work Activism and the 1961-1962 Royal York Strike’, *Labour/Le Travail*, 58, 2006; Timothy Minchin, “‘Labor’s Empty Gun’: Permanent Replacements and the International Paper Company Strike of 1987–88”, *Labor History*, 47, 1, 2006; Stephen Norwood, ‘Organizing the Neglected Worker: The Women’s Trade Union League in New York and Boston, 1930–1950’, *Labor History*, 50, 2, 2009; Judith Smart, ‘Respect Not Relief: Feminism, Guild Socialism and the Guild Hall Commune in Melbourne, 1917’, *Labour History*, 94, 2008; Thornton, “‘We Have No Redress Unless We Strike’”; John Tully, “‘Nothing but Rebels’: Union Sisters at the Sydney Rubber Works, 1918-42”, *Labour History*, 103, 2012.

⁵⁶ Smart, ‘Respect Not Relief’.

⁵⁷ The second longest discussion of relief was Christian Koller exploration of transnational donations that funded relief, Koller, ‘Local Strikes as Transnational Events’.

⁵⁸ Baker, ‘A Tale of Two Towns’, p.154.

⁵⁹ Camfield, ‘Neoliberalism and Working-Class Resistance’, p.94.

Discussing union relief efforts was rare in these historical accounts of strikes and lockouts; even fewer historians discussed the family economy. Jeremy Miloy's article about a 1961-2 strike in the Toronto Royal York contains the longest discussion of how workers survived a strike and it lasted less than a page.⁶⁰ Timothy Minchin also discussed the stress and struggles individual families had in his article about a 1987-88 paper strike in the United States.⁶¹ Despite not centring the question of how people survived during the dispute, some of these articles gestured towards its importance. In particular, some articles used the phrase "workers and their families" as a way of indicating the wider impact of the dispute. For example: "The day-to-day contacts with supporters and allies enabled the dockworkers and their family members to survive the twenty-seven-month-old dispute."⁶² Or: "The men and their families struggled on for 18 months, mainly on rations of potatoes, onions and jam."⁶³ Historians have indicated that they believe in families' importance to industrial disputes, but they do not study families directly. I am not arguing that any individual history of an industrial dispute must include the family economy, or even that most should. The 47 articles reviewed were asking a range of different questions and some have a very different focus, such as the actions of employers or the police.⁶⁴ However, less than two pages of discussion, out of 47 articles, mentioned the family economy. Collectively these articles make a historiographical assertion that family economies are peripheral to industrial disputes. This thesis provides an alternative to that view.

This thesis is joining a broad historiographical discussion of how to write about strikes and lockouts, but it is also studying a particular historical time. New Zealand in the 1950s was a society segregated by gender.⁶⁵ Employment policy and ideology formed the backbone for this segregated society: men were supposed to be paid a breadwinner wage, and the expectation was that married women would not do paid work.⁶⁶ The

⁶⁰ Milloy, 'A Battle Royal', p.28.

⁶¹ Minchin, "'Labor's Empty Gun'".

⁶² Davis, 'The Politics of Ports'.

⁶³ Paul Robert Adams and Erik Eklund, 'Representing Militancy: Photographs of the Broken Hill Industrial Disputes, 1908-20', *Labour History*, 101, 2011, p.1.

⁶⁴ Baker, 'A Tale of Two Towns'; Patrick O'Leary and Peter Sheldon, 'Strategic Choices and Unintended Consequences: Employer Militancy in Victoria's Meat Industry, 1986-93', *Labour History*, 95, 2008.

⁶⁵ For an excellent summary see: Bronwyn Dalley and Gavin McLean, *Frontier of Dreams: The Story of New Zealand*, Auckland, 2005, pp.307-12.

⁶⁶ Tim Frank, 'Bread Queues and Breadwinners: Gender in the 1930s,' in *The Gendered Kīwi*, Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie, eds, Auckland, 1999, p.114; Deborah Montgomerie, 'Reassessing Rosie: World War II, New Zealand Women and the Iconography of Femininity', *Gender & History*, 8, 1,

ideology and practice of the breadwinner wage had been under threat during the depression and the Second World War, both of which limited the ability of men to act as breadwinners and encouraged women into the workforce.⁶⁷ From 1945, considerable state and media resources went into restabilising the gender order and re-creating a domesticity based on men who earned breadwinner wages, and women who were based in their homes.⁶⁸ Melanie Nolan has convincingly argued that the state was undermining as well as supporting domesticity in this period.⁶⁹ However, the cracks were less apparent to contemporaries than they are to a historian, and the central role of domesticity and families to New Zealand society in the immediate post-war period is difficult to overstate.

Families were demographically important in the immediate post-war period. The end of the war saw a high rate of marriage and a baby boom. Between 1945 and 1956 the percentage of men who were or had been married increased significantly; 76 per cent of men aged 30-34 were, or had been, married in 1945, and this increased to 81 per cent by 1956.⁷⁰ The marriage age of women was younger than men, and therefore more women were married at each age group, but the pattern was the same.⁷¹ The baby boom, which accompanied the increased rates of marriage, had two stages.⁷² First was the catch-up from 1943-1946, which saw an increase in fertility rates for women across all age groups.⁷³ The second part of the baby boom was the pattern that continued into the 1970s of higher fertility rates for women in their teens and early twenties.⁷⁴ Between 1945 and 1950, three trends converged: the higher age of first child during the depression, the increase in fertility across all age groups in the mid-1940s, and the classic baby-boom, with a lower age of marriage and first child of the later 1940s. As a result of these three trends, the proportion of families with no dependent children was

1996, pp.109-10; Melanie Nolan, *Breadwinning: New Zealand Women and the State*, Christchurch, 2000, pp.192-8.

⁶⁷ Frank, 'Bread Queues and Breadwinners'; Montgomerie, 'Reassessing Rosie'.

⁶⁸ Deborah Montgomerie, *The Women's War: New Zealand Women 1939-45*, Auckland, 2001, pp.171-87; Nolan, *Breadwinning*, pp.192-207.

⁶⁹ Nolan, *Breadwinning*, pp.207-29.

⁷⁰ Arunachalam Dharmalingam, Ian Pool, and Janet Sceats, 'A Demographic History of the New Zealand Family from 1840: Tables, Auckland University Press', available at: <http://www.press.auckland.ac.nz/webdav/site/press/shared/all-books/pdfs/2007/nz-family-tables.pdf> 2007

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharmalingam, and Janet Sceats, *The New Zealand Family from 1840: A Demographic History*, Auckland, 2007.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p.168.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp.177-8.

falling. In 1945, 21 per cent of families where the father was 40-44 had no dependent children and by 1956 this had fallen to just 15 per cent.⁷⁵ Families formed by marriage relationships, and with children, were at the centre of New Zealand society in the post-war period.

Around 8,000 men worked on the waterfront and were locked-out in 1951. A New Zealand Census was taken on 17 April 1951, two months into the dispute.⁷⁶ However, this does not provide much information on watersiders' families. The only demographic information that was broken down by occupation in the returns of that census is age. In 1951, just below 50 per cent of watersiders were over 45.⁷⁷ The age of the workforce implies that a high percentage of men were married. Eighty five per cent of men between the ages 35-55 were married in 1951.⁷⁸ The best surviving evidence for the family status of watersiders is the Port Chalmers branch accident register, which was kept before and after the dispute. For each accident, the watersider's marital status, and number of dependants was recorded. Most Port Chalmers men were married with children. Between October 1948 and May 1952, 85 per cent of men who had accidents were married and more than a quarter of unmarried men had dependants.⁷⁹ Married men averaged two other dependants besides their wives, although this figure ranged between none and nine.⁸⁰ Just a quarter of the married men had no dependents other than their wives. The evidence from Port Chalmers suggested that watersiders were married and had children at the same rate as other men in their age cohort.

⁷⁵ Dharmalingam, Pool, and Sceats, 'A Demographic History of the New Zealand Family from 1840: Tables'.

⁷⁶ The census was taken two months into the lockout, and as it was not written to record workers on industrial disputes, it can be difficult to know how workers recorded themselves. For example, almost half of those who listed their occupation as 'loading and unloading cargo' also listed themselves as unemployed. Some but not all men used the 'unemployed' category to note their locked-out status. 6998 men described their occupation as 'loading and unloading cargo'. According to the Department of Labour strike Returns, 7146 men had been working as watersiders on 1 January 1951. Given the similarity between the census figures of men who recorded their occupation as 'loading and unloading cargo' and the Department of Labour for the number of watersiders on 1 January 1951, the census figures are close enough to be useful. As it was so early in the dispute only 401 strikebreakers had registered to work on the waterfront and many of them had not started work yet. Census and Statistics Department, *New Zealand Population Census, 1951, Vol. VII – Dwellings and Households*, Wellington, 1954, p.1; Strike Returns, 19 April 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁷⁷ Census and Statistics Department, *New Zealand Population Census, 1951, Vol. IV – Industries Occupations and Incomes*, Wellington, 1954, p.47.

⁷⁸ Census and Statistics Department, *New Zealand Population Census, 1951, Vol. II – Ages and Marital Status*, Wellington, 1953, p.49.

⁷⁹ The first data available is from May 1948, for this analysis I used all data up to register eight, which ended in May 1952. Some men were injured multiple times; these figures are based on identifying individual men in the register, not number of accidents. Port Chalmers Marine Labourers Industrial Union of Workers Accident Report Logs, AG82 L1-8, Hocken Library (HL).

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

This thesis centres families as they were socially and economically constituted rather than the legal form they took. In the face of the demographic and rhetorical importance of families in the early 1950s, those who could not get married often hid the more complex ways they lived their lives. The silence around relationships out of wedlock and illegitimacy meant that some families presented themselves socially as reflecting the nuclear ideal, when their legal situation was more complex. The parents of Dennis Brown, one of my interviewees, could not get married until after their children were born, when his father managed to divorce his previous wife.⁸¹ While divorce was generally more widely accessible to, and used by, working-class couples in New Zealand than it was in the United Kingdom, it could be unobtainable.⁸² For the purpose of this thesis, the difference between a family where the parents were legally married and one which only presented itself as if they were is not consequential, except to the extent that it affected relationships within the family, or their access to resources.

Single men were part of waterfront life and culture. In his oral history, Tom Gregory presented the waterfront as a workplace of single men: “A lot of the watersiders were like seafarers – never got married, you know. And I thought to myself – well when I got married they really gave me the bird – they thought I was – put my head in and they thought I was really going crazy.”⁸³ Given the other evidence, Gregory was probably over-stating the presence of single men on the Wellington waterfront. Gregory’s description of the wharf is more useful as a characterisation of a sub-culture, rather than a demographic statement. If Wellington, with 2,295 workers, had the same percentage of single men as Port Chalmers, there would have been 350-450 single men – enough to tease and harass a man who was about to get married in the way Gregory described.⁸⁴ Single men are discussed in this thesis, both as part of families and often family economies, and sometimes in contrast to the experience of married men and their families.

⁸¹ Dennis Brown, interview with Grace Millar, 12 October 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project. Frankie Manson, another child of a watersider whose oral history has been recorded, told a similar story, Frankie Manson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995 Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, Oral History Centre Alexander Turnbull Library (OHC-ATL).

⁸² Hayley Brown, ‘Loosening the Marriage Bond: Divorce in New Zealand, c.1890s-1950s’, PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2011.

⁸³ Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁴ Strike Returns, 19 April-15 July 1951, ICA Act – Strike: Waterfront Workers refusal to work overtime, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

Single men also had relationships that went unrecorded. There is no evidence of men in sexual relationships with each other, or any kind of discourse around homosexuality during the dispute. However, the waterfront as a space, and sailors in particular, featured heavily in Chris Brickell's *Mates and Lovers: A History of Gay New Zealand*. He described a Lyttelton hotel, The British Hotel, as a known hang-out for men interested in sex with men in this period.⁸⁵ Given the smallness and maritime focus of Lyttelton it would be foolish to assume that all watersiders were only interested in sex with women. For the purpose of this thesis, single should be understood to mean unmarried, not unattached; unfortunately it is impossible to go further on the available evidence. My approach replicates some of the ways families were centred in the period, and for lack of sources it will, unfortunately, end up replicating some of the silences.

In post-war New Zealand, families were as important socially and politically as they were demographically. The 1949 election was fought on images of homes and families. Both Labour and National presented themselves as the protector of the family and the friend of the housewife.⁸⁶ Walter Nash, the leader of the Labour opposition in 1951, famously described his politics as: "I am socialist in the sense that I believe that a major responsibility of government is to provide collectively for the economic welfare and security of the individual. But I am a conservative in the sense that I look upon the family as the foundation of the nation".⁸⁷ In 1946, Labour had introduced a universal family benefit, of ten shillings a week per child under 16, paid to the mother of the child.⁸⁸ Margaret Tennant described the welfare state at this time as: "strongly geared to the support of young families through its housing, social security and taxation policies".⁸⁹ The state also gave financial support to many organisations designed to assist and protect families, such as Plunket and Marriage Guidance.⁹⁰ The value placed on families during the 1949 election was not just for the campaign.

⁸⁵ Chris Brickell, *Mates and Lovers: A History of Gay New Zealand*, Auckland, 2008.

⁸⁶ Chris Brickell, 'The Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 40, 2, 2006; Nolan, *Breadwinning*, pp.193-6.

⁸⁷ Ben Schrader, 'Labour at Home: The First Labour Government and the Familial Suburban Ideal,' in *At Home in New Zealand: History Houses People*, Barbara Brookes, ed., Wellington, 2000, p.131.

⁸⁸ Margaret McClure, *A Civilised Community: A History of Social Security in New Zealand 1898-1998*, Auckland, 1998, pp.106-9.

⁸⁹ Margaret Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare: Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*, Wellington, 2007, p.126.

⁹⁰ Brown, 'Loosening the Marriage Bond', p.214; Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare*, pp.134-7.

In this period, to be pro-family was to be pro-home, as there was a strong association between forming a family through a marriage relationship and having a separate physical space. Ben Schrader discussed three different depictions of homes in 1940s New Zealand and argued that what they had in common was “their belief that home life was best conducted in individual family households.”⁹¹ Space of one’s own was strongly connected to getting married; couples expected (but were not always able) to live in their own spaces and it was common for children to live with their parents until they got married. From the late 1930s, there was a severe housing shortage in New Zealand that was exacerbated by the war and baby boom. This shortage dominated the physicality, meaning and experience of homes.⁹² The new couples of the marriage boom were the image of the housing crisis, quite literally in the case of a 1946 government film, which depicted a young couple’s search for suitable housing.⁹³

By the early 1950s, the state was deeply involved in supporting urban housing, just as it was supporting families. Building state housing was central to both the economic and social policy of the first Labour Government, elected in 1935.⁹⁴ Both Labour and National centred housing in the 1938 election campaign, which Labour won.⁹⁵ In 1949, when they won the election, National allowed state housing tenants to buy their own homes, but they also built new state houses.⁹⁶ Ben Schrader demonstrated that the familial ideal of domesticity was central to both the design and representation of state housing.⁹⁷ State housing was organised to both support families and maintain the gender order.

This thesis has not studied New Zealand families in the 1950s in general, but a specific subset of New Zealand families: families where one member was part of the 1951 waterfront dispute. Class is necessarily a feature of industrial disputes, which almost always involve some level of class-consciousness. NZWWU defined their interests as united with other New Zealand workers frequently throughout the dispute: “The

⁹¹ Schrader, ‘Labour at Home’, p.129.

⁹² *ibid.*, pp.126-7.

⁹³ *ibid.*, pp.127-8.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.125.

⁹⁵ Ben Schrader and Victoria Birkinshaw, *We Call It Home: A History of State Housing in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2005, pp.39-40.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, pp.43-52.

⁹⁷ Schrader, ‘Labour at Home’; Louise Shaw, ‘A Woman’s Place?’ in *At Home in New Zealand: History, Houses and People*, Barbara Brookes, ed., Wellington, 2000.

struggle of the waterside workers is a very vital part of the struggle for the interest of all New Zealand workers”.⁹⁸ When seamen, miners and freezing workers went on strike in support of the NZWWU, they were defining their interests in common with watersiders. The class position of the workers involved in this thesis is relatively clear-cut, but the relationship between class and family, and the definition of women’s class position in a breadwinner society is a more complex question. Common definitions of class were developed with male workers in mind, and have proved stubbornly persistent in the face of the challenge to acknowledge women’s existence.⁹⁹ In 2002, Elizabeth Faue made a positive claim for the importance of understanding class in the context of family, rather than focusing on the ways that families do not fit into classic definitions of class: “By following on these insights, we come to recognise that friendship and kinship networks and communities offer individuals their first and only continuous experience of class.”¹⁰⁰ This thesis is not attempting to answer larger questions about families and class-consciousness in a general way, but it is studying families and a class-conflict in detail, and therefore exploring some of the ways that class was experienced within families.

Using the term working-class as a descriptive term in the current historiographical environment emphasises that there were class differences in 1950s New Zealand society. Class does not figure largely in historians’ approaches to the history of post-war New Zealand.¹⁰¹ Framing the homes and families in this thesis in class terms draws

⁹⁸ National Executive NZWWU, ‘Attack on the Workers: Facts of the Waterfront Dispute’, 1951, Wilfred McAra Papers, Folder 8, D-5, AUL.

⁹⁹ The most substantive effort has been to define the relationship of workers’ wives to the means of production within a Marxist framework, but these have been less than satisfactory. See, for example, Lydia Sargent and Heidi Hartmann, *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: A Debate of Class and Patriarchy*, London, 1986.

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Faue, ‘Retooling the Class Factory: United States Labour History after Marx, Montgomery, and Postmodernism’, *Labour History*, 82, 2002, p.113.

¹⁰¹ The two exceptions are historians examining the welfare state and Cybèle Locke’s recent work on union radicals; see Bronwyn Labrum, ‘Family Needs and Family Desires: Discretionary State Welfare in New Zealand, 1920-1970’, PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2000; Bronwyn Labrum, ‘Developing “the Essentials of Good Citizenship and Responsibilities” in Maori Women: Family Life, Social Change, and the State in New Zealand, 1944-70’, *Journal of Family History*, 29, 4, 2004; Bronwyn Labrum, ‘The Material Culture of Welfare in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A Case Study of Clothing’, *History Australia*, 2, 3, 2005; Locke, *Workers in the Margins*; Ben Schrader, ‘Planning Happy Families: A History of the Naenae Idea’, MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993; Schrader, ‘Labour at Home’; Ben Schrader, ‘The Other Story: Changing Perceptions of State Housing’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 40, 2, 2006; Schrader and Birkinshaw, *We Call It Home*. Historians interested in class have tended to focus on the development from the Maritime strike of 1890 to the election of the first labour government in 1935. For a summary see: Jim McAloon, ‘Class in Colonial New Zealand: Towards a Historiographical Rehabilitation’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38, 1, 2004; Melanie Nolan, ed., *Revolution: The 1913 Great Strike in New Zealand*, Christchurch, 2005.

attention to the fact that not everyone lived like the families that I am writing about. Chapter 1 examines the economic situation of watersiders' families in detail, to explore what the distribution of wealth meant.

Working-class families in 1951 were, of course, not homogenous. Some of the ethnic differences have been flattened by time, so the extent to which Yugoslavians, for example, made a distinct ethnic community during the dispute is hard to trace from this vantage point.¹⁰² Enough evidence has survived to discuss Māori families, and their experiences of the dispute, in this thesis. 1951 was at the very beginning of the great Māori urban migration, one of the largest social transformations of the twentieth century.¹⁰³ The Auckland branch had about 75 Māori workers, out of 2,000, a small percentage, but enough to form a Māori committee.¹⁰⁴ The freezing workers' union included a column in Māori in at least one issue of its bulletins.¹⁰⁵ Not all Māori workers who participated in the dispute were working in those worksites because of urban migration. In some ports, such as Bluff, Māori had a much longer history of working on the wharves.¹⁰⁶ In 2008, Aroha Harris argued that existing historiography tended to emphasise urbanisation as a time of decline for Māori, and ignore the ways Māori maintained relationships after moving to the city, which she outlines as: 'kin, kai and karakia'.¹⁰⁷ Almost all the discussions of Māori families in this thesis are examples of the connections that Harris depicts.¹⁰⁸

The twin images of consensus and prosperity have dominated the historical accounts of post-war New Zealand.¹⁰⁹ This historical narrative of 1950s New Zealand downplays or

¹⁰² Anna Green's interviews did provide some evidence on Yugoslavian communities. However, to have gone into detail would have required identifying the individuals involved, which I was not able to do.

¹⁰³ Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whanwhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End*, Second Edition, Auckland, 2004, pp.197-99.

¹⁰⁴ 'Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951', 1952, 94-106-10/3, Roth Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

¹⁰⁵ 'Freezing Workers Bulletin', 12 June 1951, Edward Thompson Papers, J. C. Beaglehole Room.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Stevens, 'Muttonbirds and Modernity in Murihiku: Continuity and Change in Kāi Tahu Knowledge', PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2009, p.16.

¹⁰⁷ Aroha Harris, 'Concurrent Narratives of Māori and Integration in the 1950s and 60s', *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 6/7, 2008, p.182.

¹⁰⁸ Māori seamen were part of the 1951 waterfront dispute, but the only evidence I have of this is names, see Auckland Seamen's Strike Committee – Financial records, 80-307-22/03, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, ATL.

¹⁰⁹ The exception is Redmer Yska's work, which focuses on young people and fits much more with international literature re-evaluating the 1950s. See: John Murphy and Judith Smart, eds, *The Forgotten Fifties: Aspects of Australian Society and Culture in the 1950s*, Melbourne, 1997; Redmer Yska, *All Shook Up: The Flash Bodge and the Rise of the New Zealand Teenager in the Fifties*, Auckland, 1993.

ignores the events of 1951. Graeme Dunstall characterised the period: “Unsurpassed prosperity and social tranquillity characterized the two decades from 1945.”¹¹⁰ Michael King emphasised the negative side of consensus, and places 1951 to one side: “apart from a flurry of union activity at the beginning of the decade and the impact of rock and roll at the close, the 1950s were dull, grey, conformist years in New Zealand – the calm before the storm that was the 1960s”.¹¹¹ By studying working-class families under stress, this thesis will offer another perspective of 1950s New Zealand and demonstrate that the social history of 1951 challenges the notions of both prosperity and consensus.

Partisans of the lockout and supporting strikes began writing its history before it ended. In May 1951, ‘The Freezing Workers Strike Bulletin’ stated: “Shortly we shall have reached the end of one of the longest strikes on record. Then the present struggle will be history; people will talk of ‘back in ‘51’; and a clean ticket in the Freezing-Workers’ Union will be a worthy badge indeed!”.¹¹² Watersiders and their supporters were remembering the dispute for a purpose; they saw all industrial disputes as part of a larger struggle, and telling the story of past struggles was vital for industrial disputes that followed. *151 Days* stakes its claim for the historical importance of the dispute by placing it within the history of industrial disputes in New Zealand and opening with what Scott describes as the ‘first strike’ in New Plymouth in 1841.¹¹³ Over the decades, the *Public Service Association Journal*, the publication of New Zealand’s public sector union, ran articles about the dispute with titles such as ‘Will the 1951 siege on trade unionism happen again?’.¹¹⁴ In 2012, Auckland waterside workers were again locked out, and union supporters printed material about 1951 to help make sense of the struggle.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Graeme Dunstall, ‘The Social Pattern,’ in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, W. H. Oliver, ed., Wellington, 1981, p.397. The recent ‘Slice of Heaven’ exhibition used a similar formulation: ‘Slice of Heaven: 20th Century Aotearoa’, Museum Exhibition, Museum of New Zealand: Te Papa Tongarewa.

¹¹¹ Michael King, *After the War: New Zealand since 1945*, Auckland, 1988, p.45. Bronwyn Dalley and Gavin McLean colour the period as dynamic rather than grey, but largely paint the same picture, Dalley and McLean, *Frontier of Dreams*, 307-12.

¹¹² ‘Freezing Workers Strike Bulletin’, 14 May 1951, 94-106-39/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹³ Scott, *151 Days*.

¹¹⁴ Rona Bailey, ‘Where Have All the Stories Gone’, *The Public Service Journal*, 73, 1986; John Milne, ‘Will the 1951 Siege on Trade Unionism Happen Again?’, *The Public Service Journal*, 65, 1, 1978.

¹¹⁵ Eddie, ‘1951 It Ain’t for Now’, *The Standard*, 16 January 2012, available at: <http://thestandard.org.nz/1951-it-aint-for-now/> accessed 7 February 2013; Josh O’Sullivan, ‘We Support the Maritime Union: On the Ports of Auckland Strikes’, *International Socialist Organisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand*, 20 January 2012, available at: <http://iso.org.nz/2012/01/20/we-support-the-maritime-union-on-the-ports-of-auckland-strikes/> accessed 7 February 2013; ‘Talk on 1951 Waterfront Lockout – and What’s Happening Today’, *Redline: Contemporary Marxist Analysis*, 4 March 2012, available at: <http://rdln.wordpress.com/2012/03/04/talk-on-1951-waterfront-dispute-and-whats-happening-today/> accessed 8 February 2013; Chris Trotter, ‘Munz - Won: Poal – Nil’ *Bowalley Road*, 31 March 2012, available at: <http://bowalleyroad.blogspot.co.nz/2012/03/munz-won-poal-nil.html> accessed 7 February

Watersiders, and their supporters, have been considerably more committed to the memory of the dispute than those who opposed them – content with their victory in the dispute, they worry less about its legacy. The only exception to this silence comes from members of the Holland government. Jack Marshall, the housing minister, touched on it in his memoirs, and the niece of William Sullivan, the Minister of Labour during the dispute, wrote a sympathetic account of his role.¹¹⁶

Participants in 1951 have written about the history in order to contest the events. When writing about the literature of 1951, Lawrence Jones pointed out that in 1979 CK Stead had claimed to be involved on the periphery of 1951 with Maurice Shadbolt. Shadbolt replied that “any involvement by Stead in 1951 came as ‘a congenial surprise’ to him, but that perhaps Stead was rewriting ‘history as it *should* have been’. He went on to state that ‘already 1951 is less convincing as history than as legend’.”¹¹⁷ Jock Barnes, the President of the NZWWU in 1951, used his autobiography, published in 1998, to hit back at those who had criticised him. He had read Bassett and other historians who were critical of his leadership, and his autobiography is his statement about history and his role in it.¹¹⁸ In a recent historiographical essay, Cameron Cotter argued that participants were involved in myth-making and contrasted this with academics’ work.¹¹⁹ However, this dichotomy is oversimplified; Bassett’s vitriolic obituary of Jock Barnes for the *Dominion*, written in 2000 (by which time Bassett had become a prominent figure of right-wing politics), demonstrated that Bassett, who wrote about the dispute as an academic, was just as invested in the way 1951 was remembered as anyone who carried a loyalty card.¹²⁰

Those who were most committed to recording, remembering and writing the history of the dispute were also committed to saving its archives. When writing the play *Pass It On*, Renée worked with Rona Bailey, who had been deeply involved in the dispute and told her story in *The Big Blue*. Bailey interviewed watersiders’ wives about their roles in the

2013; Michael Will, ‘Munz Delegate: “Class War on the Waterfront”’, *Workers Party New Zealand*, May 3 2012, available at: <http://workersparty.org.nz/category/ports-of-auckland/> accessed 7 February 2013.

¹¹⁶ John Marshall, *Memoirs*, Auckland, 1983; Spencer, *The Incoming Tide*.

¹¹⁷ Both Shadbolt and Stead are prominent New Zealand novelists; Lawrence Jones, ‘From Fretful Sleepers to Juice Extractors: Versions of the 1951 Waterfront Dispute in New Zealand Writing, 1952-1986’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 12, 1994, p.135.

¹¹⁸ Bramble, ed., *Never a White Flag*.

¹¹⁹ Cameron Cotter, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Dispute in New Zealand: A Historiographical Appraisal’, 489 Research thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2007, p.6.

¹²⁰ Michael Bassett, ‘Harold (“Jock”) Barnes, 1907-2000’, *The Dominion*, 6 June 2000.

dispute. Rona Bailey kept her notes from these interviews, and after her death her daughter Meg Bailey donated those notes to the Alexander Turnbull Library.¹²¹ Dick Scott, who wrote the first history of 1951, donated his papers relating to the dispute to the Alexander Turnbull Library in 2006 and 2007.¹²² There are several collections of personal papers of participants in the dispute that contain relevant material which they saved during their lifetime and was then donated to archives after their death.¹²³ The dispute was a catalyst for Herbert Otto (Bert) Roth's interest in labour history.¹²⁴ He went on to write about the 1951 waterfront dispute and about labour history generally.¹²⁵ He was also New Zealand labour history's greatest hoarder, whose massive collection of material was donated to the Alexander Turnbull Library after his death; this included many important records from the Auckland branch of the NZWWU. The national office of the NZWWU and most branches did not survive after the dispute, and many branch records have been lost.¹²⁶ Dick Scott described rescuing *Transport Worker* from empty union offices with Bert Roth.¹²⁷ Most of the union material that has survived, survived because someone saved it in their home for decades.

Collectors had a strong level of consensus about what a dispute was, what material is relevant, and what they should collect. Papers that are named after an individual participant have very little material that is personal to the collector; the papers of Toby Hill, the general secretary of the NZWWU during the dispute, include his diaries, which record where he was each day of the dispute, but this is an exception.¹²⁸ Instead they are collections of union files and mass-produced material. This can be seen in the archival footprint of the illegal pamphlets. Complete sets of illegal pamphlets are one of the

¹²¹ Rona Bailey Papers, 2006-041-157, ATL.

¹²² Richard Scott Papers, MS-Group-1499, ATL.

¹²³ MS-Papers-1717, Alexander Drennan Papers; MS-Group-0461, John James Mitchell Papers; MS-Group-0084, Arthur Tatlow Taylor Papers, MS-Group-0427, Toby Hill Papers, ATL; Jock Barnes Papers, Vault 156, Auckland University Library (AUL).

¹²⁴ Kerry Taylor, 'A Labour of Love: The Making of Bert Roth Labour Historian,' in *Pioneering Labour History: Essays in Honour of Bert Roth*, Pat Walsh, ed., Palmerston North, 1994, pp.9-10.

¹²⁵ Herbert Roth, *Trade Unions in New Zealand Past and Present*, Wellington, 1973; Herbert Roth, 'The New Zealand Trade Union Congress, 1950-51,' in *Common Cause: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Labour History*, Eric Fry, ed., Wellington, 1986; Herbert Roth, *Wharfie: 'From Hand Barrows to Straddles': Unionism on the Auckland Waterfront*, Auckland, 1993; Herbert Roth and Jenny Hammond, *Toil and Trouble: The Struggle for a Better Life in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1981.

¹²⁶ The exception to this archival disruption is the Port Chalmers branch, AG-082, Port Chalmers Waterfront Workers' Industrial Union of Workers, Records, HL. The records of the Seamen's Union have also survived, 80-307, New Zealand Seamen's Union: Records, ATL.

¹²⁷ Scott, *Radical Writer's Life*, p.163.

¹²⁸ Toby Hill, '1951 diary', 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

most common and widely archived resources about the dispute.¹²⁹ Those involved in producing and distributing illegal pamphlets were staking a claim for the importance of both the pamphlets and the dispute itself, by saving so many complete sets of archives. In contrast, Bert Roth kept the Auckland relief committee cashbook, but no other records of relief committees survived.

Watersiders and their supporters were not the only people who used archives to actively remember the dispute. The files created by the police during the dispute were later transferred to the Security Intelligence Service (SIS). The SIS used these as working files until 2008, when they were transferred to Archives New Zealand and became publicly available.¹³⁰ The files show evidence of their continued use. For example, Walter Albert Eric Jones was a member of the executive of the Lyttelton branch of the NZWWU; mentions of his name in the police files were circled in red pen with the note: “Card destroyed 17/13/84”.¹³¹ The police records of 1951 were part of the SIS’s on-going surveillance of ‘subversive’ activities, for decades afterwards.

State entities that were charged with managing the dispute maintained records about their management, but outside of these organisations, state archives have not recorded the dispute. Despite careful searching, I could find no mention of it, or any of its effects, in the archives of the Department of Education, State Advances Corporation (SAC), or Social Welfare.¹³² The records of non-state institutions are also silent on the dispute – no matter how close they were to it. Port Chalmers was a one-industry town,

¹²⁹ For example Wellington bulletins are archived in the following collections: 94-106-10/06, Roth Papers; 2006-041-151, Bailey Papers; MS-Papers-8572-06, Scott Papers; 84-058-03/17, Hill Papers; WWU: Leaflets and Bulletins, MS-Papers-0202, ATL; (R10074976 and R10074977) ADMO-21007-25/9/20/8 Part 1 and 2, Registered Files, ANZ-WO.

¹³⁰ NZPA, ‘Secret 1951 Waterfront Strike Files Released’, *The National Business Review Website*, 3 March 2008, available at: <http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/secret-1951-waterfront-strike-files-released> 7 February 2013.

¹³¹ For example, Report of E.G. Ward relative to Waterfront Strike Lyttelton: Public Meeting Latimer Square, Christchurch, at 2pm on Sunday 6/5/51, 7 May 1951, (R10074968), ADMO-W5595-21007-1-25/9/20/2 Part 1, Registered Files, Archives New Zealand.

¹³² I searched Gateway, Archives NZ catalogue, for files from State Advances Corporation, Department of Education and Social Security Department for files that covered 1951 and which might contain relevant material. Circular Memoranda from Education Board, ABHO-W3771/11-D2-101; General Administration Files – Education Board Circulars, ABDM-W3569/253-15/3A-7; Hawke’s Bay Education Board: Inspectors Files: Copies of Head Office Circulars, ABFI-W3556/99; Minute Book - January 1951-April 1952, Wellington Education Board and Wellington District School Files ABDM-W3569/20-31; Social Security Department, Head Office, Registered Files, ADBO-16141-W2756; State Advances Corporation, Registered Files, AELE-19203; State Advances/Housing Corporation Circulars, BBHQ 22729 A1091/5/a; Wanganui Education Board Circulars, ABDV-W3571/168, ANZ-WO.

but the Port Chalmers churches do not mention it in their written records.¹³³ There is almost no middle ground when it comes to the 1951 waterfront dispute in the archives. Either files are directly about the dispute and have been carefully created and maintained in order record the dispute, or the dispute is not mentioned at all.

The voices of locked-out and striking workers, their wives and their children are almost entirely absent from the archival record of 1951. The Herbert Roth Papers contain some letters from individuals to the Auckland branch of the NZWWU, and there are similar letters in the Seamen's Union papers. Apart from that, the only place that individual's voices appear is in police files. The police recorded substantial information about the relief efforts, and their files contain some of the only records that cross the front door into the homes of locked-out and striking workers.¹³⁴ These records were only created because the police made the same intrusion. This thesis is significantly enriched by sources from the state because of the state's involvement in the dispute, however ambivalent a position that leaves a historian in.

Oral history is an important source for this thesis, particularly because the archives are so devoid of personal material. Oral history gives the historian access to experiences that did not leave a written record, or where the written record has not survived. Oral history, like the expansion of labour history in the 1960s, and the development of women's history and later gender history, had its origins in the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s.¹³⁵ The strong desire of participants to record the history of the dispute has resulted in a substantial oral history record. In 1977, Johnny Mitchell, who had been on the executive of the Auckland branch of the NZWWU during 1951, sat down with Douglas Crosado and started telling his story.¹³⁶ Over the next decade he continued to record his opinions and experiences; they recorded a total of 47 hours of material. Mitchell and Crosado were not alone in believing that the oral history of 1951 was

¹³³ Presbyterian Church Port Chalmers '99th Annual Report for the Twelve Months Ended 30 June 1951', 1951, 19/16 DS 7 99/48 AH 14/3, Presbyterian Archives Research Centre (PARC); Port Chalmers Anglican Congregation of St Leonards: Records, ARC-0362; Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, St. Mary's Branch, No. 536, Port Chalmers: Records, AG-289; Holy Trinity Anglican Church (Port Chalmers): Records, ARC-0354; Port Chalmers Congregational Church: Records, AG-141, HL.

¹³⁴ For example, Government and Public Order – Strikes: 1951 Strike: Nelson Districts (R10074972), ADMO-21007-W5595-2/25/9/20/5, Registered Files, ANZ-WO.

¹³⁵ Marianne Debouzy, 'In Search of Working-Class Memory: Some Questions and a Tentative Assessment,' in *Between Memory and History*, Marie-Noëlle Bourguet, Lucette Valenksi, Nathan Wachtel, eds, New York, 1990, p.56.

¹³⁶ John James Mitchell, interview with Douglas Crosado, Ray Grover and Bert Roth, 1977-1988, OHInt-0219/1, OHC-ATL.

worth recording. The upturn in study of social history of 1951 in the 1980s was mirrored in an increased interest in recording people's experiences. Both Andrea Hotere and Anna Green completed oral history projects as part of their research. Cath Kelly, who was deeply involved in left-wing politics and the union movement, recorded a series of interviews with trade unionists in the late 1980s, some of which discussed 1951 in depth. The people who saved material, archived that material and wrote the history of the dispute all overlap, as do the people who both recorded and participated in oral histories.

There are now over 50 interviews that touch on the dispute in the Alexander Turnbull Library Oral History Centre, and a smaller number in the Huntly Coal Museum.¹³⁷ This thesis has made extensive use of these interviews. In addition I have been granted access to two private collections of tapes. Anna Green granted me access to the interviews that she completed for her PhD thesis in the mid-1980s. Gerry Evans completed oral history interviews with watersiders and their wives in 2000, and his widow, Caroline McGrath, gave me access to these interviews.¹³⁸

Most oral histories have been recorded with men who were locked out, or men and women in prominent supporting roles. The experiences of women whose husbands were locked out or on strike are rare. This is partly the result of unfortunate archiving mishaps. Andrea Hotere interviewed ten women for her 1989 oral history project for her dissertation on Port Chalmers, and Melanie Nolan interviewed six women in 2001; these interviews are not archived and I could not locate them.¹³⁹ In addition, the women whom Rona Bailey interviewed for Renée's project did not want to be recorded, so only the notes of these interviews have survived. There are seven interviews with women whose husbands were locked out or on strike, from three different sources. Ida Thompson, the wife of Ted Thompson, a prominent watersider, was recorded twice, in 1990 and 1995; both interviews were part of the large number of trade union interviews already discussed.¹⁴⁰ Maureen Martin was interviewed by her grandson as part of a school project. Subsequently Maureen Martin's daughter-in-law, an oral historian,

¹³⁷ See bibliography for full list.

¹³⁸ He used some of the material for a *Listener* article, Evans, 'The Big Blue'.

¹³⁹ Both have made some use of their interviews in secondary accounts: Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers'; Nolan, "'The Women Were Bloody Marvellous'"; Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams'.

¹⁴⁰ Ted Thompson and Ida Thompson interviews with Cath Kelly, 1990, OhInt-0112/3; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

archived her son's interview about 1951, alongside an interview she did with Martin about the depression.¹⁴¹ In addition, the 1992 Huntly Coalfields oral history project included interviews with five miners' wives, whose husbands were on strike in 1951.¹⁴²

As part of this thesis, I undertook an oral history project. I started my PhD thesis 58 years after 1951 and so I was only able to record interviews with people who were young at the time of the dispute.¹⁴³ In searching for interviewees I advertised through Grey Power newsletters, union newsletters and word-of-mouth. I completed 20 interviews. Twelve were with children of watersiders and one with a child of a freezing worker, all of whom were living at home at the time of the dispute. One of these interviewees, Lully Heemi Watene, was also a striking worker in her own right, as she worked at Hellabys, a freezing works. I interviewed two striking seamen, who had been young and single in 1951. I did three interviews with people who were young couples in 1951: one watersider, one watersider's wife, and a watersider and his wife in a joint interview. Finally I interviewed Len Gale, whose brother was a striking seaman. The interviews were structured to record how people remembered the dispute, but also to encourage people to remember aspects of their family life that they may not have considered part of the dispute.

Where possible this thesis uses both oral history and archival evidence to address the same questions. For example, a letter from the NZWWU to their Australian counterpart that was providing substantial funding, which states that watersiders with two children received £2 per week in grocery orders, provides a different perspective on the dispute from that of the oral history of a watersider's daughter: "Years later my father told my brother that he was at the union headquarters and food or money was being given out. He lined up and when it was his turn he was asked "How many kids have you got?" "Two," he replied. "You need three or more kids to get anything today." My father was not the sort to go begging after that treatment".¹⁴⁴ Any history of relief efforts is

¹⁴¹ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458, OHC-ATL.

¹⁴² Olive Boyd and Elizabeth Pendalton interview with Jamie Mackay, 7 February 1992, OHInt-0020/03; Cora and Charles Bullock interview with Jamie Mackay, 23 March 1992, OHInt-0020/13; Annie Gracie interview with Jamie Mackay, 3 April 1992, OHInt-0020/14; Alison Pitt, interview with Jamie MacKay, 3 April 1992, OHInt-0020/17, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHC-ATL.

¹⁴³ See Appendix 1 for more information.

¹⁴⁴ Toby Hill, National Secretary, NZWWU, to J. Healy, General Secretary, Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, 16 July 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL; Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

stronger for having both. The balance between oral history and archival sources differs from chapter to chapter. There is little oral history material about how relief was distributed and there is little archival evidence of how families survived. When archival and oral evidence cover the same ground, this thesis explores how they resonate together.

The ability for oral history to reveal how people have made sense of the past is one of its great strengths.¹⁴⁵ Recent historical work has emphasised that people make sense of their past in the context of other narratives about that past.¹⁴⁶ Penny Summerfield summarised this approach: “The cultural approach to oral history suggests that narrators draw on public discourses in constructing accounts of their pasts for their audiences.”¹⁴⁷ Penny Summerfield and Alastair Thomson, who have looked at the Second and First World Wars respectively, have convincingly argued that public, cultural narratives of those events have had a significant impact on the oral histories that narrators tell.¹⁴⁸ However, other historians have expressed concerns with centring public discourses when analysing oral history. Anna Green, who recorded interviews about 1951, argued: “Rather than seeking to fit oral narratives to pre-existing cultural representations or psychoanalytic templates, would it not be more fruitful for oral historians to explore those points of conflict and rupture in people’s lives that create confrontations with discourses of power?”¹⁴⁹ Hester Barron discussed how miners in Durham had remembered the 1926 lockout, both individually and collectively.¹⁵⁰ Rather than trying to address questions of memory in a general way, this thesis will explore how industrial disputes are remembered, and how that affects oral history narratives.

The thesis is organised thematically around different aspects of family survival, and family experiences during the dispute. There is a broad chronology, with the first

¹⁴⁵ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, London, 2010, pp.78-105; Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, New York, 1991.

¹⁴⁶ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, pp.95-105.

¹⁴⁷ Penny Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews’, *Cultural and Social History*, 1, 1, 2004, p.65.

¹⁴⁸ Alastair Thomson ‘ANZAC Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia’ in Robert Perks and Alastair Thomson, eds, *The Oral History Reader: Second Edition*, New York, 2006 pp. 244-254; Penny Summerfield, ‘Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews’, *Cultural and Social History*, 1, 1, 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Anna Green, ‘Individual Remembering and ‘Collective Memory’: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates’, *Oral History*, 32, 2, 2004, pp.42-3.

¹⁵⁰ Hester Barron, *The 1926 Miners’ Lockout: Meanings of Community in the Durham Coalfield*, Oxford, 2009, pp.225-53. Other historians have also discussed the way working-class communities have remembered industrial disputes, for example, Debouzy, ‘In Search of Working-Class Memory’.

chapter set before the lockout, and the last two covering the end of the lockout and its aftermath. This thematic approach means that some threads weave through several chapters; for example, Australian unions donated money, this money was spent by relief committees, and was fought over by branches and each of these is discussed in separate chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the connections between families and the waterfront before the dispute. The thesis then turns to the central question 'how did families survive?' Chapter 2 starts with the external material support that both families and unions received. It describes the collection of money by unions, and how families accessed goods, money and credit. Chapter 3 looks at the family economy directly, and explores the different strategies families used to eat and to pay the rent. Chapter 4 examines how union relief was provided; it looks at what families received, but also at the gendered implications of relief committee's decisions. Having answered, to the extent that it can be answered, how families survived, the thesis turns to other aspects of families' participation in the dispute. Chapter 5 looks at the gendered nature of union work. Chapter 6 focuses on workers' decisions to continue, or to end, the dispute. Chapter 7 explores the cost of the dispute to families.

It is now almost thirty years since Nancy Hewitt and Ellen Ross suggested writing about the family economy in industrial disputes and more than twenty since Bruce Scates published the first article that did just that. This thesis makes a contribution to the study of family economies in industrial disputes, which is under-developed, building on previous discussions of the family economy through an analysis of the 1951 waterfront dispute. It makes explicit historiographical arguments about what has been left out of the study of industrial disputes, and the implications of these omissions.

Chapter I: Waterfront work and watersiders' families 1945-1950

When Kevin Ford was a child in the 1940s, his father worked as a watersider in Bluff. Each morning Kevin or his brother would get up early and walk up the road until they could see the harbour. If there was a ship in port their father would get up and go to work, if there was no ship in port he would sleep in.¹ Ford's story illustrated one of the ways in which the waterfront was connected with watersiders' homes and families. This chapter will explore the threads that connected a watersider's family and his work; later chapters will show the ways that the dispute disrupted that relationship.

The four main points of connection between home and work were also the issues that caused most of the conflict on the waterfront: hours of work, health and safety, dirty cargo, and wages.² This chapter starts with the workers' body, which travelled to and from work each day. The hours watersiders worked affected their family, as did the physical threat that accidents on the waterfront posed to a watersider's body. The chapter then turns to the objects a watersider brought backwards and forwards: clothes and the wage packet.

To explore the relationship between men's paid work and homes and families – which are sites of unpaid labour – is to stand in the shadow of a mammoth theoretical and political debate. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Marxist feminist historians attempted to fit women's unpaid labour into a Marxist economic framework.³ This chapter is not attempting to enter that debate. Rather than trying to theorise the general relationship between families and the workplace, this chapter describes that relationship in one place and time. Historians of mining communities have explored the demands that industry

¹ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

² Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.133.

³ For example, Bonnie Fox, *Hidden in the Household: Women's Domestic Labour under Capitalism*, Toronto, 1980; Heidi Hartmann, 'The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework', *Signs*, 6, 3, 1981; Jane Humphries, 'Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working-Class Family', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1, 1977; Sargent and Hartmann, *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*; Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, 11, 1, 1986; Wally Secombe, *Weathering the Storm: Working-Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline*, London, 1993; Louise Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, New York, 1978.

made on workers homes.⁴ Fewer scholars have studied the communities of waterside workers in other times and places in this way.⁵ The focus of this chapter is narrow, not because the experiences of watersiders and their families were unique, but because it is focused on the details of the relationship between home and work. Janet Finch argued that the structure of employment demanded labour from workers' wives.⁶ This chapter is looking at the way waterside work required labour from family members, but is also interested in the way the needs of workers' homes and families affected waterfront work.

It is almost impossible to overstate the importance of the waterfront to the New Zealand economy between 1945-1950. The vast majority of all goods that came in or out of New Zealand did so on a ship, and were loaded and unloaded by watersiders.⁷ The NZWWU had branches at 25 ports, and the branches ranged in size from over 2,000 members to just nine (see Figure 1 for details about the location of waterside workers).⁸ To examine waterfront labour in the immediate post-war period in New Zealand is to walk a well-trodden path. Michael Bassett covered it in some detail in *Confrontation* '51.⁹ Jock Barnes's autobiography discussed the same period, defending his actions from critics like Bassett.¹⁰ In 2001, Anna Green argued that the nature of waterfront work caused the intense struggle for control between capital and labour on the waterfront; her analysis is detailed and persuasive.¹¹ This chapter does not attempt to re-litigate the questions explored by other historians, but asks how our picture of

⁴ For example, Carr, *Pit Women*; Neil Evans and Dot Jones, 'A Blessing for the Miner's Wife: The Campaign for Pithead Baths', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh Labour History/Cylchgrawn Hanes Llafur Cymru*, 6, 3, 1994; Valerie Hall, 'Contrasting Female Identities: Women in Coal Mining Communities in Northumberland, England, 1900-1939', *Journal of Women's History*, 13, 2, 2001; Jane Parpart, 'The Household and the Mine Shaft: Gender and Class Struggles on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1926-64', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13, 1, 1986; Annette Salt, 'Women of the Northern Coalfields of NSW', *Labour History*, 48, 1985.

⁵ Pat Ayers, 'The Hidden Economy of Dockland Families: Liverpool in the 1930s,' in *Women's Work and the Family Economy in Historical Perspective*, P. Hudson and W.R. Lee, eds, Manchester, 1990; Pat Ayers, 'Work, Culture and Gender: The Making of Masculinities in Post-War Liverpool', *Labour History Review*, 69, 2, 2004; William Pilcher, 'The Portland Longshoremen: A Dispersed Urban Community,' in *Urban Anthropology in the United States: Four Cases*, George Spindler and Louise Spindler, eds, New York, 1978.

⁶ Janet Finch, *Married to the Job: Wives' Incorporation in Men's Work*, London, 1983.

⁷ *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1950*, 1951, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbooks Collection.

⁸ Strike Returns, 1 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁹ Bassett, *Confrontation* '51, pp.14-60.

¹⁰ Bramble, ed., *Never a White Flag*, pp.74-155.

¹¹ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*.

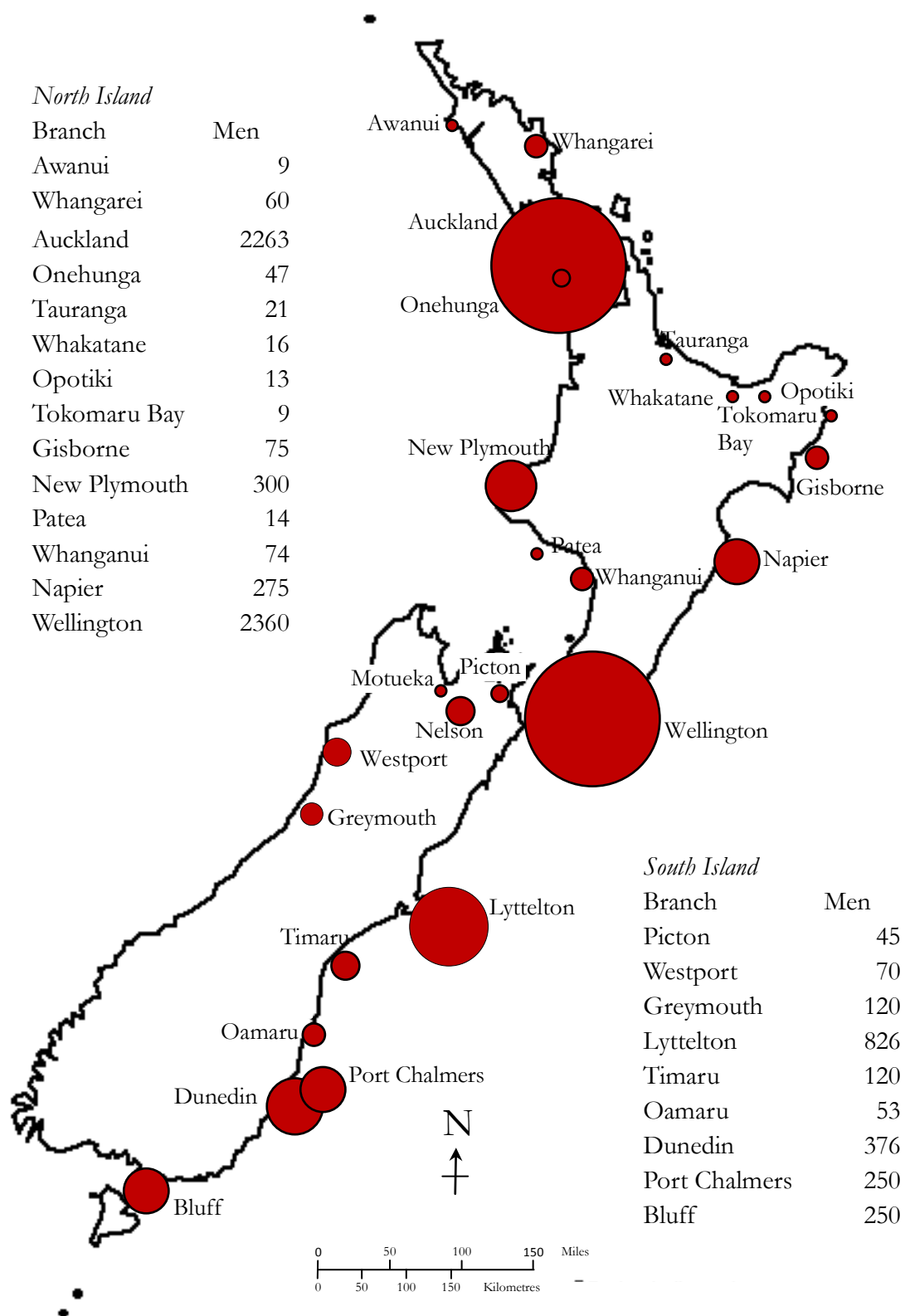


Figure 1: Number of waterside workers 1 January 1950 by location, Strike Returns, 1 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO (Map created with the assistance of L. Millar).

waterfront work changes when we zoom out far enough to see workers' homes as well as their workplaces.

Waterfront work was intense, physical, non-mechanised labour. The watersider travelled between home and work each day and his body was the key link between the two. Watersiders worked from 8 am until midday, had an hour lunch-break and worked again until 5 pm. In addition, overtime ran from 6 pm-9 pm on weekdays and 8 am-12 pm on Saturday.¹² In the post-war period, the significant demand for shipping meant watersiders regularly did overtime, at least in the major ports. In Lyttelton and Auckland, watersiders worked an average of 50 hours a week.¹³

Hours of work and overtime were key matters in the NZWWU's negotiations for decades. For the first half of the twentieth century, waterfront work was casual; employers picked workers to unload each ship.¹⁴ Watersiders often criticised this as an 'auction block' system, and changing it was a priority for the NZWWU.¹⁵ Anna Green details various attempts to improve the system, in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.¹⁶ In February 1947, after watersiders instituted an overtime ban, the NZWWU won a guaranteed wage scheme, at all but the smallest ports. Members of the NZWWU were paid £5 a week, if they attended work at 8 am each day, no matter how few hours they worked.¹⁷ Members were also paid two hours attendance money for each day.¹⁸ This guaranteed wage fundamentally changed the nature of waterfront work. From 1947, Kevin Ford would not have had to go and check if a ship was in, as his father would have had to go to work whether or not a ship was in, or he would have forfeited the guaranteed wage. Watersiders' hours of work were still very uncertain; on a given day they could be free if there were no ships, or they could work until 9 pm at night.

¹² Waterfront Industry Commission 'Reprint of the ORDER of the Waterfront Industry Commission', 31 October 1947, p.47, (R22380730), AAVO-W3472-66, Waterfront Control Commission, Head Office, ANZ-WO.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp.26, 38.

¹⁵ Bramble, ed., *Never a White Flag*, pp.50-2.

¹⁶ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, pp.113-36.

¹⁷ Waterfront Industry Commission 'Reprint of the ORDER of the Waterfront Industry Commission', 31 October 1947, pp.52-53, (R22380730), AAVO-W3472-66, Waterfront Control Commission, Head Office.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

In 1936, the NZWWU tried to get new legislation protecting the 40 hour week applied to waterfront work. The Arbitration Court ruled against them, accepting ship-owners' arguments that Saturday work was necessary and that the uneven nature of waterfront work made the waterfront an exceptional workplace.¹⁹ Following this ruling, overtime continued to be an issue of contention. The NZWWU was particularly frustrated when the Waterfront Industry Commission (WIC) denied their 1949 claim for a wage increase, because the high level of necessary overtime allowed watersiders to earn a comparatively good income: "The supreme irony of the situation is that [watersider's] penal rates are used against them and quoted as their normal wages".²⁰

These long hours of work affected when a watersider could be at home. Watersiders generally needed food when they came home, which required labour from others, usually their wives. Some watersiders travelled the boundaries from home to work just once each day, while others travelled between home and work up to three times a day for meals.²¹ The pattern of each day for other family members could be shaped by when a watersider arrived home and needed feeding. The union explicitly used the experiences of watersiders' family members to criticise the long and unpredictable hours of work on the waterfront. The NZWWU used a fictional 'Mr Hall', a returned serviceman, to put their claims about hours of work to the public. They said of his wife: "Mrs. Hall does not know whether he will be home for meals".²²

Watersiders were more successful in addressing the number of hours they worked through informal resistance than negotiation. In Lyttelton, the 9.15 pm train, which men working overtime could be expected to catch back to Christchurch, was referred to as a 'ghost train', as so many men left work early and caught the 8.20 pm train instead.²³ These men could reach home almost an hour earlier than they would have if they had stayed at work until 9 pm. Workers also claimed time from work through 'spelling', the process whereby some watersiders within a work-gang would take time off while the other members of the work-gang covered for them. Hour-about spelling was most

¹⁹ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.87.

²⁰ NZWWU, 'Wage Case', June 1950, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

²¹ For example, Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010; Russell French interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²² Draft leaflet, 84-058-08, Toby Hill Papers, ATL.

²³ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.107.

common, but some organised spelling on a week-about basis.²⁴ This could be a way of making the workplace conform to the needs and demand for a watersider's labour at home; some watersiders took advantage of the week to dig their gardens, or to build or maintain their houses.²⁵

When they finished work, workers did not have to return home. A watersider mediated his relationship between his home and family and the waterfront, which gave him the opportunity to create spaces for themselves. For example, Maureen Fairey remembered that her father went to work on the waterfront before she got up each morning, and that she got the impression that he spent the time he was there gambling.²⁶ On the waterfront, leisure was a collective enterprise. Claiming leisure-time through spelling required other workers' assistance, and watersiders often used that time for collective leisure, such as drinking and gambling.²⁷ Hours of work on the waterfront had an impact on the family, and watersiders fought to lessen hours of work both formally and informally, but changes to the hours of work did not necessarily mean watersiders spent more time with their families.

Watersiders organised their own leisure informally, but they also organised leisure through the union, in the space they created between home and work. Alex Drennan, the president of the Auckland branch put it plainly: "While the Union stands for improved standards of life for the working people and to preserve a world of peace, it also attends to the cultural and social needs of its members."²⁸ The New Zealand Waterside Workers' Council of Sport organised inter-port tournaments for rugby league, cricket, and soccer.²⁹ The Auckland branch had two debating teams, a brass band, a pipe band, a chess club, and a sports committee that organised a wide range of sporting events.³⁰ Even the much smaller Port Chalmers branch had a harmonica band

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.106.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.105.

²⁶ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²⁷ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.106.

²⁸ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

²⁹ *Transport Worker*, 7 February 1949, p.6.

³⁰ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

and entered sports teams in inter-port tournaments.³¹ Organising space between home and work for its members' leisure was part of a branch's role. The union linked their leisure activities to their demand for shorter hours of work: "Sport through national organisation is proving a great asset to the national union which has been fighting for many years for improved social amenities on our waterfront. The national union has always advocated for more leisure time for watersiders."³² Charlotte Macdonald has outlined the connection, in New Zealand, between state-supported leisure and a reduction in the hours of work.³³ Waterside branches were supporting their right to reduced hours of work, by organising and emphasising leisure. While they used images of watersiders' wives waiting for their husbands to come home in their campaign against overtime, branches also advocated for watersiders' opportunities for leisure away from their families.

Workers' bodies connected their home and the waterfront; waterfront work endangered workers' bodies. In the immediate post-war period, waterfront work was dangerous and accidents were common. In 1950, Port Chalmers had 250 workers and those workers recorded 90 accidents.³⁴ Workers were most likely to injure their arms and legs, although the accident registers also contain descriptions of injuries to workers' backs and testicles.³⁵ Between 1937 and 1950, three or four watersiders died each year as a result of work place accidents.³⁶ Accidents were not the only cause of ill health; the day-to-day toil of waterfront work caused slow damage to watersiders' bodies. When loading and unloading badly packaged, or loose, cargo such as slag, coal and wheat, watersiders breathed in a lot of dust, which could lead to all sorts of health problems.³⁷ Preventative measures were basic; one watersider remembered having to drink a cup of milk on the hour, when he was unloading slag, to stop bleeding.³⁸

³¹ 'Harmonica Display', Permanent Exhibition, Port Chalmers Maritime Museum; *Transport Worker*, 7 February 1949, p.6

³² *Transport Worker*, 7 February 1949, p.6.

³³ Charlotte Macdonald, *Strong Beautiful and Modern: National Fitness in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, 1935-1960*, Wellington, 2011, pp.73-4.

³⁴ Port Chalmers Waterfront Workers' Union, Accident Registers 1949-1951, AG-82 L5, Port Chalmers Waterfront Workers' Industrial Union of Workers Records, HL.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.54.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.48.

³⁸ This practice is also discussed in *Transport Worker*, 15 January 1951, p.6; *ibid.*, p.49.

Workplace accidents threatened a family's financial wellbeing. Barbara Brookes described the catastrophic situation that nineteenth and early twentieth century families faced if they lost a breadwinner.³⁹ In the immediate post-war period, injury was not usually as devastating, but it still threatened families financially. One Auckland watersider, who was off work for a workplace injury for two years in 1949 and 1950, received £4-10-0 a week compensation. This income was barely half of what he would earn if he worked forty hours a week, and it put considerable stress on his family's financial situation.⁴⁰ Health problems could eventually prevent a watersider from working on the wharf, and force him to take lower paid work that was easier on his body.⁴¹ In addition, workplace injury could prevent watersiders performing other roles within the family, such as gardening.⁴² Despite the social security legislation of the first labour government, breadwinners' health was central to a family's economic wellbeing in the immediate post-war period.

Between 1945 and 1950, disputes over safety caused 22 per cent of all working hours lost to industrial conflict.⁴³ Green demonstrated that safety was a key area where workers struggled for control, as workers' desire for a safe workplace came into conflict with ship-owners' desire for a quick turn-around.⁴⁴ The most high-profile dispute over safety in the immediate post war period was the *Mountpark* dispute, which remained unresolved for the first half of 1948, although work stopped only for a short amount of that time.⁴⁵ The *Mountpark* berthed at Auckland on 9 February 1948, and Auckland watersiders complained that the hatches were too heavy and awkward to lift safely by

³⁹ Barbara Brookes, 'Hygiene, Health, and Bodily Knowledge, 1880-1940: A New Zealand Case Study', *Journal of Family History*, 28, 2, 2003.

⁴⁰ N. Cole to R. Jones, 5 June [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL. Cole does not discuss the origin of his compensation payments. The Auckland branch of the NZWWU ran a sick benefit fund, and nationally the NZWWU had a legal aid fund to assist watersiders to sue employers for compensation. Depending on the compensation he received, he may also have been entitled to a benefit under the Social Security Act. NZWWU, Report of the Twenty-Seventh Conference, 6-15 December 1949, 84-058-1/16, Hill Papers, ATL; Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁴¹ For example, Al Rukaird to R. Jones, 28 May 1951; O. Bull to R. Jones, 28 May 1951, 94-106-11/03; James Parker to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴² Gwendolene Pawson described her father not putting a garden in a new house after they move as he was getting older – injury would have hastened this process. Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 7 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁴³ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.133.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp.52-4.

⁴⁵ Port of Auckland, "Mountpark Dispute", 1948, (R22381250), AAVO-W3472-139-5/487C, Waterfront Control Commission, Head Office, ANZ-WO; NZWWU, Report of Special Meeting of the National Council held in the Trades Hall, Wellington during the period Tuesday 6th July, to Friday 9th July 1948, 84-058-1/11, Toby Hill Papers, ATL.

hand.⁴⁶ On 19 February, waterside workers refused to open the hatches by hand and were dismissed; over the next few months, conflict over the *Mountpark* continued.⁴⁷ In August, the watersiders won a legal ruling, which protected their right to refuse unsafe work.⁴⁸

Waterside workers, and their union, acknowledged the impact that workplace accidents and health problems had on families. NZWWU produced accident registers so that branches could keep track of injuries. As well as information about the injury, this register had space to record whether or not the injured worker was married, and how many dependants he had.⁴⁹ Recording details of dependants in the accident register was an acknowledgement of how central a watersider's wage was to his family. Union branches also supported injured workers and their families. At the larger branches, collection buckets were put out on pay day for members who had been injured or killed.⁵⁰ The Auckland branch started a welfare fund in 1942 to provide for injured workers more systematically.⁵¹

Watersiders' clothes travelled between home and work regularly, and the dust from cement, lampblack, coal and other cargo came with them. The most common cause of industrial conflict on the waterfront 1945-1950 was dirt money.⁵² The level of dirty work involved in waterfront work varied considerably depending on the cargo. Lampblack, which was used to make tyres, was one of the most noxious substances on the waterfront; its tiny black particles covered men and their clothes.⁵³ The NZWWU demanded protective clothing, cleaning facilities, and substantial dirt money for workers

⁴⁶ J. Gatt to The Master, SS Mountpark, 13 February 1948, reproduced in Port of Auckland, "Mountpark Dispute", 1948, (R22381250), AAVO-W3472-139-5/487C, Waterfront Control Commission, Head Office, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁷ Port of Auckland, "Mountpark Dispute", 1948, (R22381250), AAVO-W3472-139-5/487C, Waterfront Control Commission, Head Office, ANZ-WO; NZWWU, Report of Special Meeting of the National Council held in the Trades Hall, Wellington during the period Tuesday 6th July, to Friday 9th July 1948, 84-058-1/11, Toby Hill Papers, ATL.

⁴⁸ For more details see, Bassett, *Confrontation* '51, pp.27-9; Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, pp.138-41.

⁴⁹ Port Chalmers Waterfront Workers' Union, Accident Registers 1949-1951, AG-82 L5, Port Chalmers Waterfront Workers' Industrial Union of Workers Records, HL.

⁵⁰ Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁵¹ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁵² Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.141.

⁵³ NZWWU, 'Submission on Carbon Black', 1950, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

who unloaded lampblack.⁵⁴ Employers paid dirt-money for lampblack ranging from 1/0d to 2/6d per hour.⁵⁵ There were major conflicts about lampblack throughout 1950. When union representatives met with the Minister of Labour they described the effect of lampblack not just on watersiders, but on their wives: “one man, his wife got it into her skin through washing his overalls and her hands were infected, and the skin peeled right off.”⁵⁶ By the end of the conflict, the NZWWU was successful in establishing a dirt money payment of 2/6d on top of the normal hourly rate, as the standard rate for unloading lampblack.⁵⁷

Regardless of dirt money, the tiny particles of lampblack got everywhere within watersiders’ homes, and it was watersiders’ wives who had the responsibility of cleaning this up. The NZWWU mentioned this in their submissions of the time:

I ask the Waterfront Industry Authority to take into consideration the hardship imposed on members’ wives. Despite the number of baths the worker may have, this commodity, still coming out of the skin, soils linen, towels etc. in the home, but unfortunately in the minds of some, the worker’s wife is expected to accept this without protest.⁵⁸

Watersiders who were boarding, or living in a hotel, would have their washing done as a financial transaction, but washing waterfront dirt out of watersiders’ clothes was mostly the unpaid work of a family member. In the immediate post-war period, laundry was hard physical work; few working-class families had access to a washing machine.⁵⁹ When using a copper, doing the laundry was an all-day task: filling the copper with water, boiling, rinsing, wringing and drying clothes all required intense physical labour.⁶⁰ Getting coal-dust or other dirt out of work-clothes added more work to a task that was already physically arduous.

⁵⁴ *Transport Worker*, 10 March 1950, p.7.

⁵⁵ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.141.

⁵⁶ Report of a deputation from the N.Z. Waterside Workers’ Union which met with the Minister of Labour (Hon. W. Sullivan) at Wellington on Tuesday, 20th June, 1950, (R22381204), AAVO-W3472-135-3/8/10/B, Waterfront Control Commission, Head Office, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁷ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, pp.141-2.

⁵⁸ NZWWU, ‘Submission on Carbon Black’, 1950, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁵⁹ Jean-Marie O’Donnell, ‘“Electric Servants” and the Science of Housework: Changing Patterns of Domestic Work, 1935-1956,’ in *Women in History 2: Essays on Women in New Zealand*, Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald, Margaret Tennant, eds, Wellington, 1992, p.179.

⁶⁰ Most working-class women did have access to a copper, Norah Holland, ‘Some Aspects of Home-Making’, Master of Home Sciences thesis, University of Otago, 1950, p.9. For a vivid description of washing clothes in a copper, see Olive Boyd and Elizabeth Pendalton interview with Jamie Mackay, 7 February 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/03, OHC-ATL.

The NZWWU demanded dirt money as compensation for dirty cargo. However, there was a gap between the union's articulation of the problem and its solution. Dirt money did not lessen the work of washing. Theoretically that money could have been used to buy more towels and sheets, or to pay for laundry to be done elsewhere.⁶¹ A new pair of sheets cost 35 shillings at Farmers in 1950, so 14 hours of dirt money could have replaced one pair of sheets covered with lamp-black.⁶² However, there was no guarantee that a watersider would pass dirt money on to the woman who was doing his laundry. The relationship between a watersider's wage and the family economy was not a direct one. Gwendolene Pawson's father gave his wife five pounds every week, and kept any extras, including over-time and dirt money.⁶³ In its submission to the WIC, the NZWWU spoke on behalf of watersiders' wives, but the solution that the union advocated would not lighten their load, or necessarily compensate them financially for their extra work.

The pay-packet was a critical connection between the wharf and workers' homes and the fourth area of conflict on the waterfront. Immediately before the 1951 waterfront dispute, watersiders were paid 4/3d an hour or £8/10/0 for a forty hour week.⁶⁴ These rates were only paid on hours worked; if there was not enough work then watersiders were paid a much lower guaranteed wage, £5/10/0 – almost 25 hours' work. With overtime, and additional payments for dirty work and risk, a watersider could earn considerably more than £8/10/0, but he could only rely on the guaranteed wage. The NZWWU argued for a wage increase not just for their members, but also for their families. For example, in their 1949 wage case to the WIC, the NZWWU argued:

The standard of life, the quality and quantity of food and clothing his family enjoys, the type of home and the social amenities to which the worker's family has access, the standard of education within reach of the worker's family, the recreation and cultural advancement of the family, are all determined by the workers wage. It is an industrial condition which extends, one may say, over the entire 24 hours of the day; a condition

⁶¹ Although this was rare in New Zealand, see *ibid.*, pp.48-53.

⁶² *1950 Farmers Catalogue*, Box 8, Folder 14, Item 1, Farmers Trading Company Archives.

⁶³ Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 7 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁴ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, pp.144-5.

which is not simply the sole concern of the worker himself – his wife and children are also concerned.⁶⁵

The image of the post-war period as a time of mass consumption is one of the most defining characteristics in both popular memory, and post-war historiography.⁶⁶ The department store has received significant historical attention, as a dizzying spectacle of bright lights and modernity, where with money you could buy and consume whatever you wished with minimal labour.⁶⁷ The cliché of the post-war period is that it was a time of prosperity, but how was prosperity distributed?

The oral histories of William Dougherty and Robert Hannah, whose fathers worked on the waterfront in Dunedin, demonstrate the limits of working-class prosperity and consumption in this period. Robert Hannah was born in 1941. His memories of his childhood are memories that fit with common images of post-war prosperity. Until late 1951, his family lived in rented rooms within a larger house, while they were on the waiting list for a state house. He remembers going to the department store to get new clothes when he needed them: “If clothes were needed Mum would just take me to town and get a new pair of shorts, or a shirt or something – shoes”.⁶⁸ However, Robert Hannah was an only child at this stage and his mother worked in Gregg’s spices factory. Robert Hannah’s narrative would be familiar to historians looking for stories of post-war prosperity, but he lived in a family with two wage earners and a single dependant.

William Dougherty described a very different childhood. His family, despite having three wage earners, and four non-earners, were very far from enjoying post-war prosperity in 1951, or for a long time after. When Dougherty was asked what he

⁶⁵ NZWWU, ‘Submissions to Waterfront Industry Commission, Wage Claim’, 18 February 1949, MB 550/39, Frank McNulty Papers, McMillan Brown Library (MBL).

⁶⁶ ‘Slice of Heaven: 20th Century Aotearoa’ Museum Exhibition, Museum of New Zealand: Te Papa Tongarewa; Dalley and McLean, *Frontier of Dreams*, pp.307-12; Dunstall, ‘The Social Pattern’, p.397; Barry Gustafson, ‘The National Governments and Social Change (1949-1972),’ in *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Keith Sinclair, ed., Auckland, 1990, p.267. Philippa Mein-Smith offers a more complex picture of this period, but still emphasises growth and consumer society, Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Melbourne, 2005, pp.176-7. Tom Brooking also discusses prosperity, but calls 1951-1967 ‘the last of the good years’, explicitly leaving out the period under discussion from the time of prosperity, Tom Brooking, *The History of New Zealand*, Westport, 2004, p.137.

⁶⁷ Peter Gibbons called for more historical attention to be paid to department store in 2004, the following year Helen Laurenson published such a history: Peter Gibbons, ‘The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 33, 1, 2003, p.5; Helen Laurenson, *Going up, Going Down: The Rise and Fall of the Department Store*, Auckland, 2005.

⁶⁸ Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

remembered about clothes from his childhood he said: “Hand-me-downs. Didn’t get boots till I went to school – and that was a work of art – that was the first pair – had nothing up till then – then you wound up with boots”.⁶⁹ Dougherty’s description of how he acquired clothing was not unusual for this period. Second-hand clothing circulated through buying and selling, charity, and reciprocal arrangements.⁷⁰ Bronwyn Labrum discusses these transfers of second hand clothing as an important part of the pre-war welfare system.⁷¹ Purchasing new children’s clothes as a consumer was not unheard of in working-class families immediately after the war, but it was far from common. In oral histories of people involved in the dispute, both mothers and children discuss second-hand clothes and making children’s clothes.⁷² Women’s labour, either in making and remaking clothes, or developing networks to acquire and distribute second-hand clothing, was more important than mass-consumption for clothing working-class children. While some working-class families, like Robert Hannah’s, were beginning to see increases in their standards of living in this period, many more were not. As Maureen Fairey, the daughter of an Auckland watersider, said: “We were really quite poor”.⁷³

The disputes over wages, which ultimately led to the 1951 waterfront dispute, were a demand for a working-class prosperity that did not yet exist. In 1945, the NZWWU was already arguing that workers were being left behind:

The Transport Worker enters the New Year determined to do all in its power to obtain justice for the lower paid workers and pensioners. Promises made in 1943 have not been fulfilled. The adequate family wage is yet to come. It is promised in the next session of Parliament, but this is too long to wait.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ William Dougherty interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁰ Jane Malthus and Chris Bricknell describe all three of these uses of second-hand clothing, Jane Malthus and Chris Brickell, ‘Producing and Consuming Gender: The Case of Clothing,’ in *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin 1890-1939*, Barbara Brookes, Robin Law, Annabel Cooper, eds, Auckland, 2003, p.145. Benson Porter explored the distribution of second-hand clothing in the United States, Susan Benson, ‘What Goes ‘Round Comes ‘Round: Secondhand Clothing, Furniture, and Tools in Working-Class Lives in the Interwar United States’, *Journal of Women’s History*, 19, 1, 2007.

⁷¹ Labrum, ‘The Material Culture of Welfare in Aotearoa/New Zealand’.

⁷² For example, Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2011; Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 7 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁷³ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁴ *Transport Worker*, January 15 1945, p.1.

The draft leaflet about the fictional Mr Hall, discussed earlier in this chapter, made the connection between the end of the war and the watersiders' demands explicit: "He wants a better deal for them, and all the Boys, as and when they return, than he and his mates received last time".⁷⁵ Throughout the late 1940s, despite a growing economy, consumption was still constrained by rationing and import controls.⁷⁶ During the 1949 election, the National Party's election material strongly criticised the shortages of appliance and other consumer and domestic goods.⁷⁷ After the election, the new National Government, led by Sidney Holland, ended rationing and reduced import controls.⁷⁸ More goods were available to buy, but prices increased sharply.⁷⁹ Watersiders' families, who as we have seen were not necessarily able to afford the goods available before 1949, were unlikely to be able to take advantage of loosening controls because of rising prices.

In 1949, when it came time to renegotiate the terms and conditions of work on the waterfront, the NZWWU's main claim was a significant hourly wage increase. This was rejected by the WIC, and in 1950 the union presented the claim again, stating that the WIC had not given its arguments sufficient attention.⁸⁰ Much of the 1950 wage claim was centred on the argument that the percentage of national income that wage and salary earners received had decreased since 1938-9.⁸¹ The NZWWU argued that workers' financial position was getting worse, not better: "One thing is crystal clear, however, and that is that the purchasing power of the workers' £1 has again been slashed."⁸² The NZWWU claimed an increase of 2/- an hour – almost a fifty per cent increase on their current wages.⁸³ In their wage demands of 1949 and 1950, the NZWWU was explicit in arguing that workers were being shut out from post-war prosperity.

⁷⁵ Draft leaflet, 84-058-08, Hill Papers, ATL.

⁷⁶ Brickell, 'Politics of Post-War Consumer Culture', p.135.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp.141-3.

⁷⁸ Robert Chapman, 'From Labour to National,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, W. H. Oliver, ed., Wellington, 1981, p.357.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ NZWWU, 'Wage Case', 1950; New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union, 'Wage Case', 1949, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

Watersiders transported almost all consumer goods that came into New Zealand from ship to land. They could therefore see what goods richer people were beginning to be able to access. Theft was common on the waterfront. Anna Green presented theft in the workplace as part of the battle for control, but it was also a way of shaping the workplace to the needs of the home.⁸⁴ Many of Green's interviewees described the theft of food: "blocks of cheese cut up with piano wire, or cans of peaches".⁸⁵ One watersider described, in detail, a pair of red shoes that he had brought home to his four-year-old daughter. He emphasised that his daughter was able to wear these shoes before they were for sale in the shops.⁸⁶ In this story, the shoes are a triumph because he was able to provide for his family in a way no other man could, no matter how wealthy. Watersiders attempted to access post-war prosperity through informal measures such as theft, as well as through formal negotiations for higher wages.

NZWWU consistently presented all their members as breadwinners, and families as having a single economic interest.⁸⁷ Working-class families could be more complex than the union allowed. Both R. Dougherty and W. Dougherty, one aged 34 and one 69, are listed in the Port Chalmers accident register as living at the same address. R. Dougherty was described as having two dependants and W. Dougherty was described as having one.⁸⁸ However, one of those dependants has described their actual living situation in an oral history interview, which gives a different picture of the family. When Richard Dougherty's wife died, he and his two sons moved in with his father W. Dougherty. Also living in the house was Vera Dougherty, Richard's sister, who was unmarried and had limited mobility, Vera's cousin Olive, who worked at Cadbury's chocolate factory in Dunedin, and another of W. Dougherty's grandchildren. This arrangement of family members, and income, is not apparent from the Port Chalmers accident register. Richard Dougherty's two sons are his only listed dependants. While W. Dougherty's one noted dependant is probably his grandson, it may be his daughter Vera. The accident register records two breadwinners with separate dependants. In reality, Vera ran the family economy, paid the rent, collected board and provided food; the

⁸⁴ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, pp.110-2.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p.111.

⁸⁶ Personal conversation, 23 December 2010. Narratives about theft often come from less than satisfactory sources. The value in this story is less the details of the shoes, but the satisfaction that he got from his action sixty years later.

⁸⁷ *Transport worker*, 10 August 1950, p.8.

⁸⁸ Port Chalmers Marine Labourers Industrial Union of Workers Accident Report Logs, AG82 L3, L6, Port Chalmers Waterfront Workers' Industrial Union of Workers Records, HL.

dependants were not neatly tied to a single wage earner.⁸⁹ The wage earning and non-wage earning members of that family, and how the family economy was managed, can only be teased out from their incomplete representation in the Port Chalmers accident log because one of its members completed an oral history. The breadwinner system has been upheld in the archive, which obscured the complex and different situations some families were living in.

Each week, every watersider was given his pay packets at the waterfront, while he was working.⁹⁰ On the outside of the pay packet, the details of his wages were written in pencil.⁹¹ The cash remained with the watersider while he finished his work day, and, if he was working overtime, while he had his dinner and worked until 9 pm. It remained with him if he went to the pub or anywhere else after work, and returned with him to wherever it was he slept. This was where he had to part with some of his pay packet, although he may have spent some of it on his journey home. The wage packet that he carried home was the bread that he had won and it was a source of his status within the family.

The assumption behind the breadwinner wage was that if a man earned enough money to support a wife and three children, then his wife and three children would have access to the resources they needed. While families did have a stake in individual members' wage packets, the family did not have a single economic interest. New Zealand historians have not written much on how wages were divided within a family.⁹² Erik Olssen claims, without specific supporting evidence, that working-class men gave most of their pay to their wives, who managed the household economy.⁹³ Annabel Cooper and Marian Horan similarly observed, although with considerable qualification: "the

⁸⁹ William Dougherty interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹⁰ Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹¹ Beverley Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹² While there are methodological challenges to answering questions about the division of money within families, work in other areas shows they are not unanswerable. British historians have undertaken substantial work on this topic. For a recent examples see: Josephine Maltby, "The Wife's Administration of the Earnings"? Working-Class Women and Savings in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Continuity and Change*, 26, 2, 2011; Margaret Williamson, "The Iron Chancellors": The Dynamics of the Domestic Economy in Ironstone-Mining Households, 1918-1964', *Journal of Family History*, 28, 3, 2003.

⁹³ Erik Olssen, 'Working Gender, Gendering Work: Occupational Change and Continuity in Southern Dunedin,' in *Sites of Gender: Women Men & Modernity in Southern Dunedin 1890-1939*, Barbara Brookes, Barbara Brookes, Robin Law, Annabel Cooper, eds, Auckland, 2003, p.62.

most common practice among working-class families in New Zealand was likely to have been the common British ‘whole wage system’, in which a husband handed over the wage packet to the wife to ‘manage,’ perhaps first taking a cut for himself.”⁹⁴ These observations arose from the Caversham project, the largest scale social history project in New Zealand. That the authors can only talk broadly about what was likely demonstrates how little is known about the division of money within working-class families in New Zealand.

Mabel Howard, Labour Party MP for Sydenham, and New Zealand’s first woman cabinet minister, felt comfortable stating: “In most instances the man takes the pay envelope home and the woman has to budget”.⁹⁵ In English-speaking countries, historians have argued that working-class families have put the responsibility of managing an inadequate wage in the hands of women.⁹⁶ All research on working-class New Zealand families suggests, or at least is compatible with, the belief of Olssen, Cooper and Horan that New Zealand working-class families followed this broad pattern.⁹⁷ In oral history interviews about 1951, most but not all families left the

⁹⁴ Annabel Cooper and Marian Horan, ‘Down and out on the Flat: The Gendering of Poverty,’ in *Sites of Gender: Women, Men & Modernity in Southern Dunedin 1890-1939*, Barbara Brookes, Robin Law, Annabel Cooper, eds, 2003, pp.219-20.

⁹⁵ Stevan Eldred-Grigg, *New Zealand Working People, 1890-1990*, Palmerston North, 1990, p.90.

Unfortunately Eldred-Grigg did not provide any reference for this quote so the context is not available.

⁹⁶ Pat Ayers, ‘Marriage Relations, Money and Domestic Violence in Working-Class Liverpool,’ in *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940*, Jane Lewis, ed., Oxford, 1987; Ayers, ‘The Hidden Economy of Dockland Families’; Susan Porter Benson, *Household Accounts: Working-Class Family Economies in the Interwar United States*, Ithaca, 2007; Jane Lewis, *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940*, Oxford, 1987; Martha May, ‘The “Good Managers”: Married Working Class Women and Family Budget Studies, 1895-1915’, *Labor History*, 25, 3, 1984; Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman’s Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women, 1890-1940*, Oxford, 1984; Ellen Ross, ‘Survival Networks: Women’s Neighborhood Sharing in London before World War One’, *History Workshop Journal*, 15, 1983; Williamson, “‘The Iron Chancellors’”.

⁹⁷ Karen Duder, ‘Hegemony or Resistance?: The Women of the Skilled Working Class and the Ideologies of Domesticity and Respectability’, MA thesis, University of Otago, 1992; Rosemary Goodyear, “‘Sunshine and Fresh Air’: An Oral History of Childhood and Family Life in Interwar New Zealand, with Some Comparisons to Interwar Britain”, PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1998, p.99; Labrum, ‘Family Needs and Family Desires’, p.62; Malcolm MacLean, ‘Wellington’s Class Prison: Holloway Road, 1919-1939: Steps Towards an Analysis of the Material Basis of Working Class Daily Life’, MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1994, pp.107-9; Claire Toynbee, *Her Work and His: Family, Kin and Community in New Zealand 1900-1930*, Wellington, 1995. In her discussion of children’s wages, Caroline Daley categorically states that children who stayed at home gave their pay packet to their mother, Caroline Daley, *Girls & Women, Men & Boys: Gender in Taradale, 1886-1930*, Auckland, 1999, p.33. This system was no longer common by the late 1980s, which fits with international literature; Robin Fleming, Julia Te Urikore Turupa Taiapa, and Anna Pasikale, *The Common Purse: Income Sharing in New Zealand Families*, Auckland, 1997; Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970, Family, Sexuality, and Social Relations in Past Times*, Oxford, 1995.

managing of money to a woman.⁹⁸ Most watersiders who saw themselves as breadwinners would have been part of a family where their wife, or another woman in the role of housekeeper, was responsible for managing the money, and would have handed over all or part of their wage packet to her when they got home.

Whatever system a family used to distribute resources, the original carrier of the wages always had the option of claiming more of the wage packet for himself and leaving less for his family. Beverley Arnell describes the dynamic in her family: “My mother said he had a little pay packet and he’d rub out the amount he had off and put something less on it”.⁹⁹ Arnell also described her mother searching her father’s clothes for money, when her father had fallen asleep drunk.¹⁰⁰ Wives, and other women who were managing money, had to pay rent or mortgage, provide food, and meet the basic needs of all family members, from the money wage earners gave them, together with the family benefit and any money they earned (for example, Arnell’s mother ran a boarding house). Any money that an individual watersider kept was not available for the collective family economy.

The points of connection between workers’ homes and the waterfront were also the key issues for industrial conflict. However, family members did not articulate the problems, or the acceptable solutions in public; instead the union talked on their behalf. The union was speaking for workers’ families, but not with workers’ families. The national office of the NZWWU was responsible for negotiations and communications, but the union did not have much national infrastructure. The officers of the union – Toby Hill, the secretary, and Jock Barnes, the president – were both full-time, but the only non-elected employees of the union were typists. The NZWWU communicated to union members through *Transport Worker*, which did not have a letters page.¹⁰¹ The exact readership of *Transport Worker* was not recorded, but advertisers appear to have believed women read

⁹⁸ Beverley Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010; William Dougherty, interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011; Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2011; Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012; Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011; Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 7 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project. See also Max Bollinger in Trade Union History Project, ‘A Dissenting New Zealand: a seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey’, December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451. For a counter-example, Tom Gregory appeared to manage the money in his family: Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010.

⁹⁹ Beverley Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Scott, *Radical Writer’s Life*, p.137.

Transport Worker. It had regular advertisements for bread, bacon, cake and milk, all aimed at the women who did the food shopping, as well as health department messages aimed at women who cooked and made lunches (see Figure 2).¹⁰² The National office may have had a way of speaking to watersiders' wives, but this communication was one-way; there was no means for the families to speak back to the union that spoke for them.



Figure 2: Advertisement for cheese aimed at women, *Transport Worker*, March 1950, p.10

Local branches had some contact with workers' families, as they held a picnic each summer. Port Chalmers and Dunedin organised a combined picnic, and planned for 300 adults and 350 children (their combined workforce was approximately 600).¹⁰³ All watersiders received a day off for the picnic, making these events a significant family day of leisure. The picnic committee provided food such as ice cream and lollies for children and adults. At the 1950 Greymouth picnic, 800 people attended and consumed 224 pounds of apples, 112 pounds of sweets, 40 gallons of ice cream, and 1,200 bottles of soft drink.¹⁰⁴ The main events at the picnics were competitions; there were running races for children and adults, as well as some novelty events.¹⁰⁵ Information on the organisers' intentions for those who attended the picnics survived in the

¹⁰² For example, *Transport Worker*, 12 January 1950, p.5-6, p.11; 10 March 1950, p.11.

¹⁰³ Braithwaite, PCWWU Social Committee, to Stationmaster Port Chalmers, 16 January 1949, DAGB D711 81/42, , Archives New Zealand Dunedin Office (ANZ-DO).

¹⁰⁴ *Transport Worker*, 6 February 1950, pp.6-7.

¹⁰⁵ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL; *Transport Worker*, 7 February 1949, pp.8-9, 12-13; 10 March 1950, p.5; 13 April 1950, p.6.

programme of a picnic and reports from *Transport Worker*, which emphasised the fun that children had, and portrayed a family day of leisure.¹⁰⁶ However, children did not always experience them in the ways organisers intended. Jenny Cameron hated the picnic, because she did not know anyone and felt very isolated.¹⁰⁷ Lully Watene Heemi, who became very involved in the dispute, did not like the picnics because she saw them as being too young for her.¹⁰⁸



Figure 3: Cigarette Race, 1953, Tolaga Bay School, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 'Politically Incorrect Christmas Games', nzhistory.net 20 December 2012, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/weird-xmas-party-games>

The picnics generally had the same range of events for boys and girls, but adult events were gendered.¹⁰⁹ Events described as 'lady and gentleman' were about contact between genders in a humorous way.¹¹⁰ For example, the cigarette race involved men running the length of the field with a cigarette, women then lighting this cigarette and men then running back while keeping it lit.¹¹¹ Women were recognised as mothers; at the

¹⁰⁶ *Transport Worker*, 7 February 1949, pp.8-9, 12-13; 10 March 1950, p.5; 13 April 1950, p.6.

¹⁰⁷ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁰⁸ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁰⁹ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL; *Transport Worker*, 7 February 1949, pp.8-9, 12-13; 10 March 1950, p.5; 13 April 1950, p.6.

¹¹⁰ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

¹¹¹ Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 'Politically Incorrect Christmas Games', nzhistory.net available at: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/weird-xmas-party-games> updated 20 December 2012.

Auckland picnic, there was a prize of sheets for the largest family.¹¹² The Auckland branch had a Ladies' Beauty Parade that was open to wives and daughters of watersiders.¹¹³ The three winners then judged Glamour Boys Parade where waterside workers were asked to 'bring your torso'.¹¹⁴ The picnic report in *Transport Worker* suggested that the glamour events were not taken very seriously: "NB other ports please copy and get yourself a lot of laughs and fun".¹¹⁵ Other events such as the 'Ladies nail-driving competition' transgressed normal roles.¹¹⁶ These sorts of gendered events were normal for other carnival events at this time.¹¹⁷ The events demonstrate the position of women within the union; their significance was acknowledged, but they were peripheral.

The Auckland Women's Auxiliary, which was formed in 1950, had its origin in supporting the leisure activities of the NZWWU. It was formed from the ladies' committee of the Auckland Watersiders' Silver Band, which had existed since 1944.¹¹⁸ The timing was not a coincidence; appealing to watersiders' wives was an important preparation for a struggle that unionists knew was coming. *Transport Worker* did not usually address women directly, but an article in the February 1951 *Transport Worker* claimed the union represented 16,000 people:

The membership of the New Zealand waterside workers' union touches the 8000 mark – or so it is generally believed. But isn't that only half the story. Don't we mostly fail to take into account another 8000 workers who are part of the union – eight thousand who benefit when the union wins and suffer when the union loses. Yes you're right Mrs Watersider. It's you we mean.¹¹⁹

The focus of the Women's Auxiliary was to educate watersiders' wives about unionism and build support for the union.¹²⁰ One of their aims was to represent women's views to the union structures: "To present the women's angle on any contentious matter to the

¹¹² Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Transport Worker*, 10 March 1950, p.5.

¹¹⁶ *Transport Worker*, 13 April 1950, p.6.

¹¹⁷ See the *nzhistory.net* entry that covers cigarette races, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 'Politically Incorrect Christmas Games', *nzhistory.net*, available at: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/weird-xmas-party-games> updated 20 December 2012.

¹¹⁸ Melanie Nolan, 'Employment,' in *Women Together: A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand*, Ngā Rōpū Wāhine O Te Motu, Anne Else, ed., Wellington, 1993, p.200.

¹¹⁹ *Transport Worker*, 15 February 1951, p.13.

¹²⁰ Auckland Branch NZWWU, 'Auckland (N.Z.) Waterside Workers' Annual Picnic Programme of Sports and Amusements', 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

menfolk for consideration”.¹²¹ The Auckland branch was the only branch where a women’s auxiliary existed before the dispute, although Wellington and Lyttelton both formed auxiliaries during the dispute. As an institution it could have changed the relationship between watersiders’ wives and the union, but the Women’s Auxiliary did not have an opportunity to develop as an organisation before the dispute happened.

In conclusion, the major disputes that ratcheted up tension between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the lockout were not just about the workplace, but about the connections between work and watersiders’ homes and families. The aspects of waterfront work that most affected workers’ families – shorter working hours, dirt-money, safer working conditions and higher wages – were also the areas that caused most conflict on the wharf. While the workplace made significant demands on the watersiders’ homes, and on the labour of family members, particularly watersiders’ wives, the relationship between home and work was not one-way. Watersiders changed the workplace to meet the needs of the home through both formal actions, such as wage negotiations, and informal actions, such as leaving early.

Watersiders mediated the relationship between home and work, both individually and collectively. Work limited a watersiders’ free time and gave him a set amount of money; at home neither his time nor his money were his own in the way that they were outside of home and work. Watersiders could use their mediation role to create a space between home and work for their own leisure. The NZWWU, as the collective organisation of watersiders, also mediated the relationship between home and work. It spoke on behalf of workers’ families, but did not give any opportunity for families to talk back.

At the beginning of 1951, the NZWWU had an outstanding wage claim. They were claiming a substantial increase in workers’ wages, and explicitly seeking to ensure that watersiders received their share of post-war prosperity. On 31 January 1951, the arbitration court handed down a fifteen per cent pay increase to all workers; watersiders did not receive this increase as their conditions were governed by the WIC. On February 8, employers offered watersiders a nine per cent increase. Branches refused this offer, and instituted an overtime ban. On 19 February 1951, the watersiders were told that they could not work normal hours unless they also agreed to work overtime

¹²¹ *ibid.*

and the lockout began. From 19 February 1951 all the connections between home and work were cut; men no longer had to be at the waterfront each day, their bodies were not at risk, they brought no dirt home with them and they received no pay.

Chapter 2: ‘We Didn’t Do Too Bad Among Those People’: Material Support

On Thursday 22 February, Cabinet passed the Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations under the Public Safety Conservation Act, granting themselves extraordinary powers to fight the NZWWU. The regulations restricted the NZWWU’s ability to fight the strike by criminalising picketing, rallies, marches, union propaganda, donating money or food to the union or to locked-out workers; giving police powers to enter people’s homes without a warrant; and allowing the state to de-register unions and confiscate their funds.¹ On Tuesday 27 February, the army and navy began to load and unload cargo in Auckland and Wellington, which the regulations enabled.² Workers across New Zealand criticised the regulations and the use of military labour on the wharves and went on strike in support of watersiders, often against the wishes of union leaders.³ Many – such as the workers building the Mangakino dam and Auckland freezing workers – returned to work within the month, and are therefore outside of the scope of this thesis.⁴ Seamen, freezing workers in the Wellington region, coal-miners, and cement workers in Golden Bay, remained on strike until July.⁵ Figure 4 provides geographical details of the freezing-workers, miners and cement strikes. In addition, 1,730 seamen were on strike, distributed rather haphazardly throughout the major ports depending on where their last ship had docked.⁶

¹ ‘The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951’, *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, pp.65-73.

² ‘Soldiers And Airman Unload Food Cargoes’ *The Dominion*, 28 February 1951, ADMO-W5595-21007-2-25/9/20/6 Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO; ‘The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951’, *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.69.

³ David Grant, *Jagged Seas: The New Zealand Seamen’s Union 1879-2003*, Christchurch, 2012; Richard Manning, ‘Why Did the Wellington Seamen Oppose Their National President During the 1951 Waterfront Dispute?’, 489 Honours thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, [Undated, 1980s]; Len Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community: The United Mineworkers of New Zealand, 1880-1960*, Auckland, 1995, p.288.

⁴ ‘Department of Labour, ‘Schedule of the Time and wages Lost workers Involved in Waterfront Dispute’, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO. Bassett covers the decisions to go on strike and return to work in some detail: Bassett, *Confrontation* ‘51, pp.86-135. The decision to largely ignore the shorter supporting strikes is both a necessary limiting of the scope of this thesis, and a recognition of the limited sources.

⁵ Department of Labour, ‘Schedule of the Time and wages Lost workers Involved in Waterfront Dispute’, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁶ *ibid.*

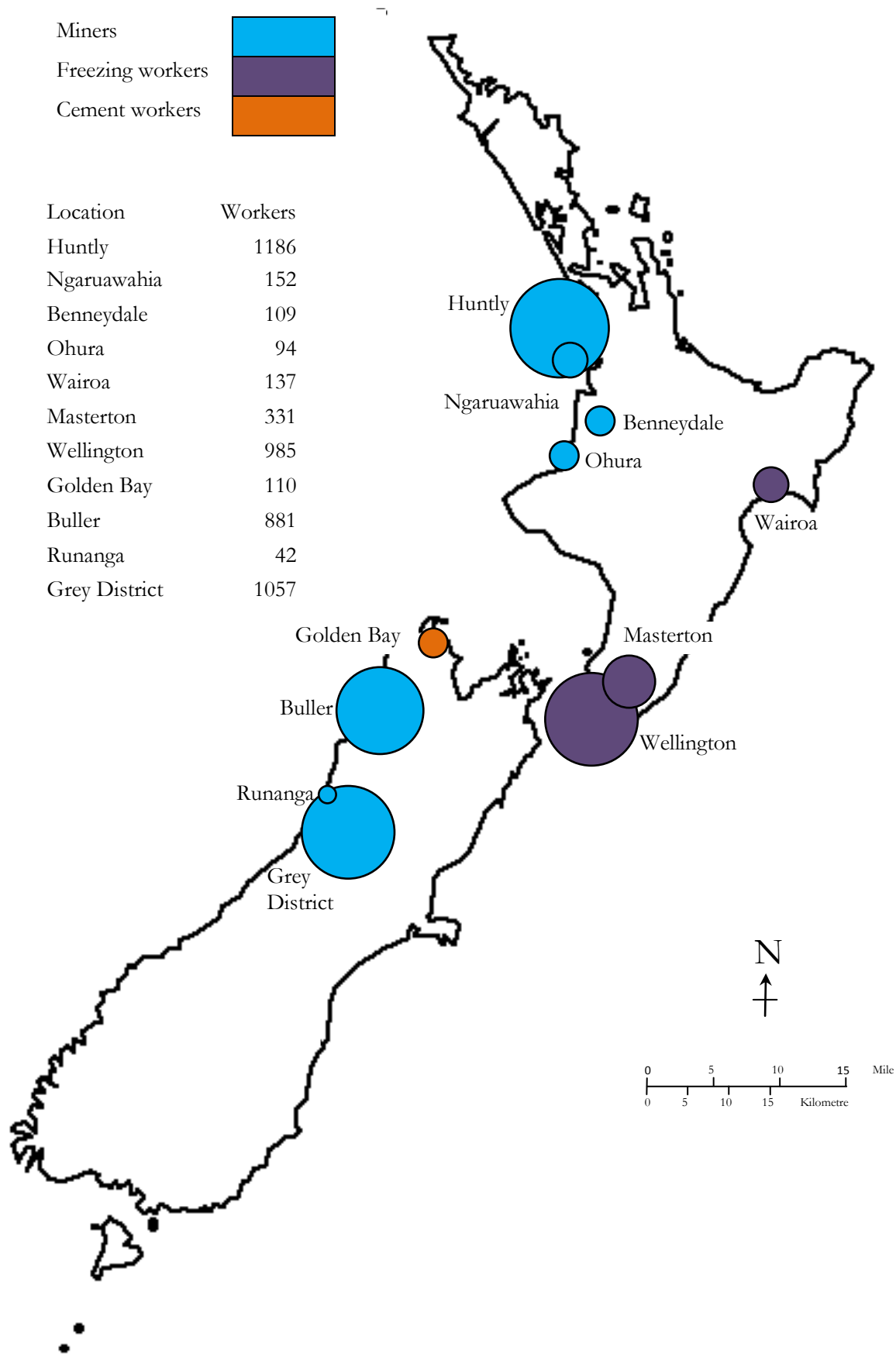


Figure 4: Number of workers on supporting strikes that lasted the duration of the dispute by industry and location, 'Department of Labour Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute', 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO (map created with the assistance of L. Millar).

Over 15,000 workers and their families survived five months without wages in 1951; this chapter examines the material support that unions and families received during the dispute.⁷ First, it briefly discusses the legal situation. Second, it looks at the NZWWU as a whole, and the money that it received from Australian unions. Third, it turns to individual branches, and looks at the way they collected money and goods. Finally it examines the gifts and credit that families relied upon. Examining outside support for unions and families in this chapter provides an important starting point to answer the question ‘how did people survive?’

On 29 June 1951, Walter Nash, leader of the opposition, argued in parliament: “The government has taken steps to prevent help of any kind being given to the wives and children of waterside workers if their husbands and children’s fathers are parties to a declared strike”.⁸ He was referring to Regulation 8 of the Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951, which criminalised the act of providing material support to striking workers. In the same month, Jock Barnes gave a speech that made the same point in more vivid language: “But of course, not satisfied with that, Holland, Sullivan and the rest of the baby-starving gang have made it an offence for anyone in New Zealand to feed a wharfie’s wife or feed a wharfie’s baby”.⁹ This formulation of Regulation 8 appeared in accounts during the dispute, and has been repeated since. In 2004, Sandra Lee, a watersider’s daughter, stated that the emergency regulations “made it a crime to give food, money or sustenance to a watersider worker and his family”.¹⁰ The autumn 2011 issue of the Maritime Union of New Zealand’s journal commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the dispute and made the same point: “it was made illegal to feed the families and children of locked-out workers”.¹¹ Historians have generally accepted this

⁷ The exact number of freezing workers that remained out on strike is difficult to calculate, as the Department of Labour stopped keeping track of freezing workers once a new union was registered. In some areas the entire work-force went back as a new union, and the strike ended, in other areas the majority of workers remained out on strike. In the total number on strike, and the map on the previous page, I have only included freezing workers from areas where there is some evidence from the Department of Labour or other sources that the strike continued after a new union was registered. Department of Labour: ‘Department of Labour Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute’, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO.

⁸ Walter Nash, *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)*, 29 June 1951, p.43.

⁹ Police Notes, Jock Barnes’s speech, 3 June 1951 2pm, ADMO-21007-25/9/20/12-Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰ Lee, ‘All in the Family’, p.126.

¹¹ Victor Billot, ‘Hard Times’, *The Maritimes*, 33, 2011, p.3.

understanding of Regulation 8. James Belich argued: “such actions as giving food to strikers’ children were banned”.¹²

The text of Regulation 8 is somewhat more ambiguous:

8. Every person commits an offence against these regulations who-
- (a) Makes any payment or contribution to any union while any of the members of the union or of any branch of the union are parties to a declared strike :
 - (b) Makes any payment or contribution to any branch of a union while any of the members of that branch are parties to a declared strike :
 - (c) Makes any payment or contribution to or for the benefit of any workers who are parties to a declared strike.¹³

Neither wives nor children are mentioned in the regulation, just contributions ‘for the benefit’ of workers. No-one was arrested for providing food to family members.¹⁴

Whether or not feeding watersiders’ wives and children would have been in breach of the regulations was never tested in court, and was not self-evident.

The claim that Regulation 8 criminalised giving food or money to the wives and children of watersiders showed an underlying assumption that it was impossible to give food to family members without it being for the father’s benefit. In parliament, Thomas Shand, the National MP for Marlborough, defended the regulations from Nash’s attacks on these grounds: “In the natural course of events wives and husbands are loyal to one another. If it is legal to give assistance to the wife, you cannot make it illegal to give assistance to the husband, because by a simple procedure, assistance can be given to the wife and brought within the confines of the law and for that reason it was necessary, if substantial assistance to strikers was to be stopped, that wives had to be included, repugnant though that was.”¹⁵ Shand seemed confused about the wording and enforcement of the regulations, but he articulated the logic by which many interpreted Regulation 8. This demonstrates how strong the breadwinner ideal was in 1950s New Zealand; the financial support of a family was portrayed as solely a man’s responsibility, so any other financial support a family received must be assisting him.

¹² James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, p.301.

¹³ ‘The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951’, *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.69.

¹⁴ See, Government and Public Order – Strikes: 1951 Strike: Prosecutions Returns (R10074992), ADMO-W55595-21007-25/9/20/9, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁵ Thomas Shand, *NZPD*, 29 June 1951, p.62.

Regulation 8 was not the only emergency regulation that affected the material situation of locked-out and striking workers. Regulation 7 reinforced the government's power to deregister a union and confiscate its funds. William Sullivan, the Minister of Labour, de-registered the NZWWU on 28 February 1951, and appointed the Public Trustee to be the receiver of the de-registered union the next day.¹⁶ The Public Trust confiscated £60,854 from the NZWWU, two thirds from the national office funds and the rest from individual branches, which was a substantial attack on the union's ability to fight the dispute.¹⁷

The six days between when Cabinet passed the emergency regulations and when it deregistered the NZWWU, gave officers and branches of the NZWWU a chance to withdraw their funds and hide them from the Public Trustee. After legal advice, The national office transferred £16,000 to a solicitor's trust account.¹⁸ The legal advice turned out to be unreliable; the solicitor, under pressure, turned this over to the receiver.¹⁹ The Auckland and Lyttelton branches were more successful in their efforts to preserve their funds. The receiver identified that they had withdrawn almost £7,000 between them.²⁰ The trustees of the Auckland branch were prosecuted for refusing to tell the Public Trust the location of the money they had withdrawn, and William Hewitt was fined £50.²¹ In addition to funds that were deliberately withdrawn, some branches had access to funds for other purposes. In 1917, the arbitration court had limited unions' ability to operate welfare activities. As a consequence many branch activities were set up and funded as separate entities from the union itself.²² For example, in 1951, the Lyttelton branch had two hospital comfort funds of £380/4/2 and £500/0/0, a picnic fund of £403/6/7, a funeral fund of £320/17/5 and a sick benefit fund of £914/3/9.²³ The legal situation of these funds was uncertain. Port Chalmers' social club

¹⁶ 'The New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union Cancellation Notice 1951' *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.75; Department of Labour, appointment of a receiver, (R397502), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁷ 'Summary', Department of Labour, appointment of a receiver, (R397502), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁸ Minutes of Executive Meeting Held 12th June 1952, [Auckland Labourer's Union], 94-106-10/1, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁹ 'Summary', Department of Labour, appointment of a receiver, (R397502), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ 'Emergency Regulations Upheld', *New Zealand Herald*, 23 June 1951, (R397559), Labour Department Library Various Files, AANK-W3285-13-3/5/398, ANZ.

²² Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.75.

²³ 'Summary', Department of Labour, appointment of a receiver, (R397502), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

accidentally overpaid the Railways department for the train to its picnic, which had taken place on 24 February 1951, four days before the union was de-registered.²⁴ The local railways department made discreet inquiries into whether it was legal to repay the money owed to the social club, and concluded that it was.²⁵ Access to these accounts for relief purposes was not automatic, as they had their own governance procedures, but the Auckland relief committee received £8,000 from the Auckland sick benefit fund to pay for relief.²⁶ The receivers were able to confiscate almost all of the national union's finances, but the picture was more varied for individual branches. Some branches lost everything, whereas Auckland retained funds of at least £13,900.

During the dispute, waterside workers throughout Australia funded their New Zealand comrades through donations.²⁷ This money was transferred from the Australian union to the NZWWU National office, which received £28,208/11/9 during the dispute.²⁸ The illegality of the union's finances affected their accounting methods. In January 1952, the NZWWU produced accounts to cover 1 March 1951 to 1 October 1951, to convince interested parties that they had spent the donations they had received well.²⁹ These list donations from Australia under different letters of the alphabet, presumably to represent different routes money took:

S.	500	0	0
S.	2914	17	0
V.	500	0	0 ³⁰

²⁴ Notice No. – 259, District Traffic Manager's Office, Dunedin, New Zealand Railways, (R20397426), DABM-D71-1/a- 81/42, Railways District Traffic/Area Traffic Manager's Office, Dunedin, ANZ-DO.

²⁵ E. H. Allington, Memorandum: Port Chalmers Waterside Workers Excursion Dunedin to Waitatati: Saturday 24 February, 21 March 1951, (R20397426), DABM-D71-1/a- 81/42, Railways District Traffic/Area Traffic Manager's Office, Dunedin, Archives New Zealand Dunedin Office (ANZ-DO).

²⁶ 'Report', Relief Committee, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union (Auckland Branch), 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁷ Jim Healy, General Secretary Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, 'To all branches and federal councillors, 24 July 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL. Trans-Tasman union solidarity has been discussed in the context of the 1970s and 1980s; see, Shelley Harford, 'A Trans-Tasman Union Community: Growing Global Solidarity', *Labour History*, 95, 2008. For another discussion of trans-national donations to strike-funds see, Koller, 'Local Strikes as Transnational Events', pp.310-2.

²⁸ New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union Statement of Receipts and Payments, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

²⁹ *ibid.* Earlier versions of these accounts have survived in Toby Hill's papers, but none of them seem to have been kept during the dispute (entries are not chronological), instead all were reconstructed afterwards, Rough accounts, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

³⁰ New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union Statement of Receipts and Payments, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

The legal situation also made transferring money across the Tasman challenging. Police made it a priority to stop money from Australia. A police report on the subject stated: “The declaring of New Zealand ports ‘black’ by Australian seamen has closed a fairly easy way of smuggling the funds into New Zealand”.³¹ Fred Rix reported on how the miners received money from their Australian counterparts:

The New Zealand government wanted to know how we were getting the money in [...] But actually we didn’t get the money in – we sold the money over there to people in New Zealand. They paid us New Zealand currency, and they were given a receipt of the money they had to claim in Australia – so no money come over. You see it was two or three lawyers – they wanted money in Australia.³²

Money was slow to come from Australia to New Zealand, because of these legal obstacles. Over half the money the NZWWU received from Australian unions during the dispute came in the last month.³³

Distributing the money from the national office in Wellington to the branches was a serious logistical challenge. The union could not leave a paper trail and so had to distribute tens of thousands of pounds in cash. Travelling between branches was expensive and time consuming. It took Toby Hill more than seven and a half hours to drive the 326 kilometres from Wellington to Napier.³⁴ The logistical difficulty of distributing money may explain the unequal distribution between branches. The Wellington branch received fifty per cent of the money that the national office distributed to individual branches during the dispute.³⁵ In contrast, the Auckland branch received a very small proportion of the money distributed (see table 2.1). The Auckland branch consistently requested more relief and Jock Barnes replied that they should use their sick benefit funds first.³⁶ No other record survived of why money was distributed this way, or how decisions were made.

³¹ Report of Detective Sergeant R. Jones, relative to: Edward Albert Napier – Vide Attached no. 3272, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

³² Fred Rix interview with Nichola Lovett, 26 November 2011, 2010.130.1, Huntly Coalfields Museum.

³³ Rough accounts, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

³⁴ Toby Hill, ‘1951 diary’, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

³⁵ Rough accounts, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

³⁶ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 16 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

Area	Funds received	Number of members	Money received per member
Auckland	£1600	2265	£0/14/2
Bluff	£657	250	£2/12/7
Otago	£1380	610	£2/5/3
Gisborne	£255	75	£3/8/0
West Coast	£1060	310	£3/8/5
Lyttelton	£1700	800	£2/2/6
Napier	£550	275	£2/0/0
Oamaru	£150	53	£2/16/7
Whanganui	£368	74	£4/19/6
Wellington	£8330	2295	£3/12/7

Figure 5: Table showing distribution of funds from NZWWU to regions during the dispute, Rough accounts, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

Donations from Australia and funds hidden from the receiver were not adequate to fund relief; branches had to obtain both food and funds from other sources. In 1993, Max Bollinger discussed collecting food for the relief committee. First he described Leo Sim, who came down from Foxton to Wellington every week with a van full of vegetables. Bollinger strongly implied that not all of these were given freely: “[Leo Sim said that the truck of vegetables was] donated by farmers and market gardeners round Foxton. [Audience laughs]. But I’m sure Leo would have had ways of getting them anyway”.³⁷ Then he described driving up with some freezing workers from Wellington to Mangaweka (210 kilometres) as that was “the nearest really friendly farmer, a bloke named Sam Potaka”.³⁸ Potaka bought sheep cheaply from local farmers, the freezing workers slaughtered them, and Bollinger drove the freezing workers and the meat back to Wellington. During the slaughtering, Bollinger visited Paddy Kearins, the Labour Party MP for Waimarino.³⁹ Kearins had a garage full of vegetables and four farmers to help load the van. The broad picture of Bollinger’s account was supported by other oral

³⁷ Trade Union History Project, ‘A Dissenting New Zealand: a Seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey’, December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Bollinger described Kearins as the Mayor of Taihape, but in 1951 he was still an MP. Members of the House of Representatives, Parliament of New Zealand, 1950-1951, S. P. Andrew Ltd: Portrait negatives, 1/2-173299-F, ATL.

histories, but as important was the way he told this story.⁴⁰ Bollinger constructs his narrative around name-checking and paying tribute to men whose contributions he values and wants to put on the record (he also mentioned Rene and Doug Hare who lent their vans). During the dispute, people's contributions needed to be hidden, because they were illegal. By emphasising individuals and putting their actions on record, Bollinger demonstrated the importance of existing relationships and connections in building union relief. Bollinger and his comrades were able to bring back a van full of food, not just because of their relationship with Potaka and Kearins, but through the various connections that Potaka and Kearins could call on in their communities.

Sometimes the origins of donations were harder to trace. Ian Church remembers eating large quantities of Cadbury Bournvita biscuits from the Dunedin factory during the lockout.⁴¹ His account shows the difficulty of tracing the origins of assistance to watersiders. Church was convinced that the biscuits were a donation from Cadbury to the union branch.⁴² It seems unlikely that Cadbury made a decision to donate directly to the watersiders, as a company. The narrative of the supportive company may have been a story Church's parents told him, to conceal more dubious origins. Perhaps, as in Bollinger's examples, it was personal relationships that meant supervisors turned a blind eye when those who lived in Port Chalmers brought biscuits home.

Jack Mulheron, a locked-out watersider who was very involved with collecting money, also emphasised the importance of personal connections: "I found a lot of the civil servants very good, we were usually given a bit of a tip-off about them and we'd approach them and they'd give regularly very often quite good sums, you know five pounds and things like that – very sympathetic".⁴³ The police suggested that two Yugoslavian apple and pear farmers who gave their produce generously to the Auckland relief committee did so because they were members of, or sympathisers with, the

⁴⁰ Reg Parkin interview with Cath Kelly, 28 November 1987, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/8; Ted Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

⁴¹ Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.96.

⁴² Ian Church, interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁴³ Jack Mulheron interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

communist party.⁴⁴ When discussing these donations, locked-out Yugoslavians described farmers as having reactionary politics and donating because of their relationships within the Yugoslav community.⁴⁵ The donation of fruit was definitely made; the relief committees' report lists donations of 114,360 pounds of apples and 15,840 pounds of pears.⁴⁶ Either way, pre-existing relationships brought substantial quantities of fruit to the relief committee.

The larger NZWWU branches organised regular pay-day collections, which provided a major source of funds throughout the dispute. The Auckland relief committee received regular donations from the Loyal Carpenters, the Railway Unity Committee, the New Zealand Workers' Union and other workplaces; the varying amounts indicate that these were collections.⁴⁷ Colin Clark was working on the Roxburgh Hydro project:

Roxburgh hydro was a huge site, with the workforce totally scattered. The Public Works Department pay car would circulate on pay day every fortnight. [...] During the waterfront dispute the pay car was followed by the union car, with two or more officials there collecting donations. It was voluntary, but many of us went from the pay car to the union car to make our contribution. The police constable must have guessed what was going on, but he did not interfere.⁴⁸

A report from the 'Wellington Watersiders Information Bulletin' described the importance of former members of the union in workplace collections: "Another successful meeting was held at another P.W.D. camp near Wellington. Our speakers returned with £30 from 40 workers. Two Irish boys, onetime members of our union will be responsible for weekly collections while the dispute lasts."⁴⁹ Jack Mulheron was part of a committee that organised such collections from smaller workplaces, and they relied on personal knowledge and connections: "Then we would ask people, we would

⁴⁴ 'Relative to Yugoslav club or probably more correctly Yugoslav benevolent society or Yugoslav association – alleged financially assisting waterside workers.' R. Jones, 18 May 1951, (R10074967), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁵ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s. Anna Green gave me access to these interviews on the condition that I do not identify individual interviewees. I have listed the full reference of all of Green's interviews that I listened to in the bibliography and will provide abbreviated references with identifying details stripped in footnotes.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*; 'Report', Relief Committee, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union (Auckland Branch), Roth Papers, 94-106-11/06, ATL.

⁴⁷ Cashbook, Auckland Watersiders' Relief Committee, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴⁸ Colin Clark, 'Waterfront Dispute,' in *I Was There! Dramatic First-Hand Accounts from New Zealand's History*, Bob Brockie, ed., Auckland, 1998, p.195.

⁴⁹ 'Wellington Watersiders' Information Bulletin' 21 March 1951, Number 5, 94-106-10/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

get plenty of advice – ‘where do you think we can get money?’ ”.⁵⁰ Mulheron’s committee needed to pool knowledge of workplaces in Wellington to raise the £1,000 it collected.⁵¹

Relief committees collected money from pubs and businesses that their members frequented, relying on the economic relationships that patronage created.⁵² Collections from hotels were an important source of income; during two weeks, the Auckland watersiders collected as much as £500 from hotels.⁵³ Pubs who did not donate were named in illegal publications and by word of mouth as providing ‘flat beer’, a signal that they should be boycotted.⁵⁴ Ted Thompson described the reverse of ‘Flat Beer’: if a pub gave to the relief committee then union members would advise friends and comrades where there was a good drop of beer.⁵⁵

A business owner from Auckland criticised these collections to a reporter newspaper: “One shopkeeper, many of whose customers earn their living on the waterfront, said collections were being taken up in the business area on behalf of watersiders. If he were approached he would have to pay up and would not go to the police. He might just as well put up his shutters if he objected”.⁵⁶ Relief committees used the threat of boycott and the promise of patronage to extract money from hotels and other businesses. Beverley Arnell was six at the time of the dispute, and the importance of boycotting certain businesses was emphasised by her parents: “There was a Christmas party for the children of the locked-out workers – or a party – sorry a party – and all the firms gave something [...] except McKenzie’s – and when I started work I never crossed

⁵⁰ Jack Mulheron interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Ted Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/3; Jack Mulheron interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL; ‘Report of Detective Sergeant R. Jones: De-registered waterside workers’ union relief depots – relief depot at Beresford Street’ 21 March 1951, (R10074967), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1; ‘Onehunga Shops pressed to help strikers’, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵³ Cashbook, Auckland Watersiders’ Relief Committee, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL.

⁵⁴ ‘Information Bulletin Lyttelton’, [1951], 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL; ‘Report of Detective Sergeant R. Jones: De-registered waterside workers’ union relief depots – relief depot at Beresford Street’ 21 March 1951, (R10074967), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁵ Ted Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁶ ‘Onehunga Shops pressed to help strikers’, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

McKenzie's door-stop".⁵⁷ Businesses could lose customers for a very long time if they did not donate to the relief committee.

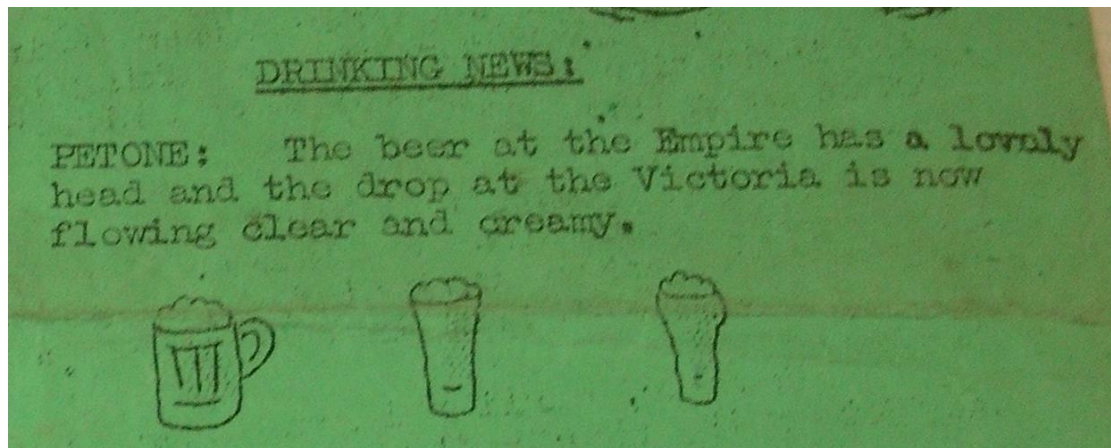


Figure 6: Drinking News, 'Freezing Workers Strike Bulletin' 23 April 1951, 94-106-39/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

Very little record has survived of how branches presented their requests for funds. In his oral history, Jack Mulheron described the different approaches he took. He recounted getting on a chair at a workplace and saying: " 'Well OK you don't agree but there are people suffering and they're fellow unionists and you're a worker.' And [you'd] get something in the hat and you're off and the police would come".⁵⁸ When talking to organised workers Mulheron relied on ideas of solidarity and reciprocity. When talking to small businesses, he took a different approach: "We'd put on the charity appeal – you know – 'We're freezing workers and we're looking for money to help the families' and some shopkeepers gave us money".⁵⁹ Watersiders' families featured in appeals as worthy objects of sympathy and donation, independent of what a donor thought about watersiders as a group or the NZWWU.

From the union branches' perspective the political positions of those who gave material support was not necessarily relevant. Whatever a donor thought of the union or the lockout their money would buy the same amount of butter. Ron S. described approaching a fisherman for some fish: "I went down to ask him for some fish [...]" and

⁵⁷ Beverly Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁵⁸ Jack Mulheron interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

he gave us five baskets of fish for every week. And he was a bloody reactionary”.⁶⁰

Francis Barnard was involved in butchering meat in an Auckland garage for the relief committee:

We had the coppers run down [...] He says “This meat for sale?” No, No we said – we kept out of it. And he looked and said – “well you can guess who it’s for can’t you?” And he said “well it’s for a good cause, as long as it’s not for sale.” And they pissed off and left us.⁶¹

A wide range of people supported feeding watersiders’ families, much wider than those who supported the NZWWU’s political goals.⁶²

The ability of branches to collect resources varied hugely. Smaller rural ports, with neither the broad base of big cities nor the working-class traditions of the West Coast, could not trade on relationships in the same way as larger ones. Frank McNulty, from Lyttelton, travelled round the South Island to set up relief committees in smaller areas: “the position in the South Island was nowhere, in those small ports, was nowhere like the position was in the two large ports in Auckland and Wellington [...] in a place like Oamaru, the port is not there now, but there’s only a very small section right in the middle of the farming community”.⁶³ In a report to all branches from the beginning of May, the national office described the situation in Napier as particularly difficult: “There were no depots. They had been unable to organise them.”⁶⁴

In contrast, the larger branches collected substantial sums during the dispute. The only branch whose records survive is Auckland. The Auckland relief committee received a total of £22,448. Almost half of that, £10,747, was the branches’ own money that it had managed to keep from the receiver: £747 from the branch, £8,500 from the sick benefit

⁶⁰ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

⁶¹ Frank Barnard interview with Shaun Ryan, 1999, Trade Union Oral History Project, OH-Int-0478/30, OHC-ATL.

⁶² Andy Croll traced the construction of women and children as innocent victims of industrial disputes and therefore a worthy cause of humanitarian concern through late-Victorian Britain, Andy Croll, ‘Starving Strikers and the Limits of the “Humanitarian Discovery of Hunger” in Late Victorian Britain’, *International Review of Social History*, 56, 1, 2011. His work (which also discusses the impact of this construction on male strikers) shows how much this attitude towards strikers’ dependents changed over time, and was a product of that time.

⁶³ Frank McNulty interview with Cath Kelly, 1989, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/4; Trade Union History Project, ‘A Dissenting New Zealand: a Seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey’, December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL.

⁶⁴ New Zealand Waterside Workers’ Union, ‘Circular to Branches’ 2 May 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

society, £1,000 from the sports club, and £500 from the pipe band. The Auckland branch received £1,500 from the National Office. The rest, £10,201, came from donations collected from workplaces, pubs, and individuals as described earlier in the chapter.

Individual families also received donations during the dispute from kin, friends, neighbours and charities. These donations were made in the context of existing working-class practices in times of crisis. Donations from kin appear most often in oral history accounts and narrators present receiving both money and food from family members as normal and easy. Flora Andersen's husband worked on the Auckland waterfront, and she described receiving gifts of money from her mother and grandmother, who lived in Dunedin.⁶⁵ Ida Thompson described her parents bringing food and money to her: "My mother and father, they were on a pension – and I used to feel a bit guilty about taking from them, when they could have well done with it themselves, but however there was no problems in that way at all, they were quite eager to give a hand."⁶⁶ The slight hesitation that Ida Thompson felt, and the way she explained it, only emphasised the extent to which accepting gifts from family members in times of crisis was normal. Family members did not have to support the lockout to contribute. One man, who was working as a strikebreaker in Wellington, sent £3 a week (almost a third of what he would earn in a 40 hour week) to his sister in Whanganui, whose husband was a striking watersider.⁶⁷

Gifts between kin featured in women's oral histories of the dispute far more than they featured in men's oral histories. All the wives of locked-out and striking workers, whose interviews have been stored in the Alexander Turnbull Library or from the Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, described assistance their families received from kin.⁶⁸ Very few men discuss gifts from extended family members in their

⁶⁵ Flora Andersen interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁶ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁶⁷ 'Wellington's New Port Union Expels Member', *The Dominion*, 15 June 1951, (R10074974), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 2, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁶⁸ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861; Cora and Charles Bullock interview with Jamie Mackay, 23 March 1992, OHInt-0020/13; Alison Pitt, interview with Jamie MacKay, 3 April 1992, OHInt-0020/17; Olive Boyd and Elizabeth Pendalton interview with Jamie Mackay, 7 February 1992; Annie Gracie interview with Jamie Mackay, 3 April 1992,

interviews.⁶⁹ This suggests two things. First, women were more involved in maintaining kin networks and donations of food than men. Renée remembered giving meat to her aunt during the lockout.⁷⁰ Her uncle might have known about the donation, but he would not have received the food, talked to Renée, and then cooked with it, so he would be less likely to remember it. Second, that women's memories of the dispute were more centred in their homes. Most men interviewed had positions of some prominence within the union. They often spent little time talking about their own homes and more time discussing the wider collective activities that they participated in.

The most common image of assistance associated with the 1951 waterfront dispute was an anonymous parcel left outside a watersiders' house. By the 1990s, anonymous food parcels were already enough of a legend that when Kerry Taylor was interviewing participants about the dispute he described them as "the famous food drops".⁷¹ Conan Doyle recalled: "At night-time bags of groceries and all sorts of things used to turn up at our back-door".⁷² Robert Hannah remembered: "I got home and there was a big pot of soup at the door".⁷³ When Ida Thompson described her neighbours' contributions, she emphasised that they were left in the letterbox.⁷⁴ While the story of donations left out for watersiders has the signs of a collective memory that has been told and retold, stories of food left outside also appear in the narratives of those who had no contact with others involved in the dispute. For example, Maureen Fairey remembers her

OHInt-0020/14 Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHC-ATL; Flora Andersen, interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012; Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁹ For examples of men who did not discuss aid they received from families in their oral history see: Ted Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project; Joseph Kereopa interview with Jamie Mackay, 27 February 1992, OHInt-0020/07, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project; Conan Doyle interview with Hugo Manson, 13 August 1986, OH-Coll-011881, OHC-ATL. An exception is Keith Roberts, a young seaman who went to live with his parents during the dispute, Keith Roberts, interview with Grace Millar, 19 June 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project. Also men who were interviewed with their wives discussed donations from family members together, for example, Cora and Charles Bullock interview with Jamie Mackay, 23 March 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/13, OHC-ATL.

⁷⁰ 'Wellington's New Port Union Expels Member', *The Dominion*, 15 June 1951, (R10074974), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 2, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁷¹ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁷² Conan Doyle interview with Hugo Manson, 1986, OH-Coll-011881, OHC-ATL.

⁷³ Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁴ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

mother telling her that “people dropped food off at the door”.⁷⁵ This narrative has one important variation, in some accounts the donations were anonymous, and in others the narrator knew who was giving the food, but in all oral history accounts of donations from friends and neighbours the narrator emphasised that the donor did not come inside the house.

The anonymity of food parcels was particularly emphasised in men’s narratives; accepting gifts of food was not compatible with a breadwinner view of masculinity. Con Doyle acknowledged that he knew who left the food, but only when he was emphasising that he did not need the donations: “I had to say ‘look Jim - no more - I could buy more tucker than you can. I’ll take it if I need it. I don’t need it really’ ”.⁷⁶ The Reverend Ian Dixon, the minister at St Columba’s Presbyterian Church, Naenae, Lower Hutt, distributed anonymous parcels, and explained his reason for discretion: “We regularly made up parcels of basic items and left them on people’s front doorsteps late at night as we did not want people to feel that they were being seen to receive charity.”⁷⁷ Women described receiving food under a much wider range of circumstances than men did, and knowing who gave it.⁷⁸

The narrative of donations of food left at the door is a narrative about neighbourliness, experienced in 1951 and retold many decades later. In these narratives, good neighbours respected boundaries. Ida Thompson explicitly praises her neighbours for not being nosy and said: “the neighbours were very good too. They didn’t interfere in any way shape or form”.⁷⁹ This definition of good neighbours within working-class communities is a historically specific one; there is evidence that a few decades earlier working-class communities tended to value support over privacy. Ellen Ross and others have argued that in London in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century working-class women created networks of support with their neighbours, because such networks were

⁷⁵ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁶ Conan Doyle interview with Hugo Manson, 1986, OH-Coll-011881, OHC-ATL.

⁷⁷ Dixon, ‘The 1951 Waterside Strike – an Untold Story’.

⁷⁸ For example, Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC- ATL; Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁹ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC- ATL.

necessary for their families' survival.⁸⁰ Historians studying the second half of the twentieth century have argued that as working-class communities got more prosperous, and spacious, privacy became much more important.⁸¹ While explicit work on the question of neighbourhood support has not received much historiographical attention in New Zealand, work on poverty in working-class communities early in the twentieth century period supported the idea that at that time, a good neighbour was a neighbour who could offer assistance and families were less concerned with privacy.⁸² This vision of good neighbouring was discussed in the Huntly coalfields oral history; one woman said that when a family was struggling in 1930s Huntly, other women would: "go to their house and just help them".⁸³ There is also evidence of changing standards of neighbouring in New Zealand. In state housing, working-class families had more physical space, and the welfare state provided a safety net that was not based on personal relations. In this context, good neighbouring became linked to respecting boundaries rather than providing support. In Barbara Duff's interviews with early state house tenants, her interviewees explicitly discuss not socialising in their neighbours' houses.⁸⁴ The stories of neighbours leaving food outside, particularly when told by women, belong to a post-war model of good neighbouring. The provision of food during the dispute had to fit with a family's existing ideas about neighbouring, independence, public and private spaces, and aid.

Some existing charities also assisted watersiders' families, although evidence of this is very thin. Two oral history interviewees mentioned that their families received assistance from the Salvation Army. Kath Cole was seriously ill when her husband was in military jail for refusing to work on the wharf and in her interview she described

⁸⁰ Anna Davin, *Growing up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914*, London, 1996; Ross, 'Survival Networks'.

⁸¹ Elizabeth Roberts, 'Neighbours: North West England 1940-70', *Oral History*, 21, 2, 1993. Other historians have emphasised neighbouring as a site of conflict, Joanne Klein, "Moving on," Men and the Changing Character of Interwar Working-Class Neighborhoods', *Journal of Social History*, 38, 2004. The change was in what was considered ideal neighbouring, not necessarily in how people behaved.

⁸² Annabel Cooper and Marian Horan, 'Poverty in the New World Dream: Families and Gender in Southern Dunedin, New Zealand, 1890-1920', *Journal of Family History*, 29, 2, 2004.

⁸³ Olive Boyd and Elizabeth Pendalton interview with Jamie Mackay, 7 February 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/03, OHC-ATL. This is compatible with Claire Toynbee's work, although even in this earlier period Toynbee described tension between assistance and privacy, Toynbee, *Her Work and His*, pp.148-9.

⁸⁴ Barbara Duff, 'Families and State Housing: Ideals Practices, Change and Problems', MA thesis, Massey University, 1998, p.112.

receiving vital assistance from the Salvation Army.⁸⁵ Ian Church also discussed the assistance his family received: “A fellow who had served with Dad in the Navy was a captain in the Salvation Army in south Dunedin, Captain McCallum. Now how he got to know about our situation I don’t know. But when things were pretty grim, he arrived one day with a food parcel.”⁸⁶ Ian Church’s mother was ill, as was Kath Cole, so the Salvation Army’s intervention was consistent with their normal work.⁸⁷ The annual report of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children stated that its workload had gone up during the industrial dispute.⁸⁸ To treat watersiders’ families in the same way as any other working-class family was not a neutral act in 1951. Existing charities that intervened appear to have done so when the wife was suffering additional hardship and therefore fitted the charities’ usual criteria for assistance.

Three Wellington Presbyterian ministers were very active in providing material assistance during the dispute: John Somerville at St Andrew’s on the Terrace, the church nearest the waterfront; Lloyd Geering at St James, Newtown, an established working-class community; and Ian Dixon in St Columba’s, Naenae, a new working-class community.⁸⁹ They were all theologically liberal and socially active.⁹⁰ They took an active interest in the politics of the dispute, visiting trades council meetings and meeting with the Prime Minister.⁹¹ Dixon also described taking an active role providing aid: “We made inquiries in the parish and found that for them there was actual hardship.”⁹² Dixon was working with others in his church: “We collected some money so that when we found instances of real distress over matters other than food we had a fund that we were able to divide up. The ten men on what I remember as a wonderful Session (the governing body within the parish) all worked with me as a harmonious team and we all gave money to the treasurer so that he could write out cheques for people in need in an

⁸⁵ Kath and Gordon Cole interview with Cath Kelly, 1988, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/2, OHC-ATL.

⁸⁶ Ian Church interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁷ Kath and Gordon Cole interview with Cath Kelly, 1988, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/2, OHC-ATL; Ian Church interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁸ ‘New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children (Wellington Branch Incorporated) Annual Report and Balance Sheet year ended 30 September 1951’ p.5, MSX-3294, New Zealand Society for the Protection of Home and Family, Wellington Branch, Records, ATL.

⁸⁹ Dixon, ‘The 1951 Waterside Strike – an Untold Story’.

⁹⁰ Dixon, ‘The 1951 Waterside Strike – an Untold Story’; Lloyd Geering, *Wrestling with God: The Story of My Life*, Wellington, 2006.

⁹¹ ‘Waterfront Situation and the Church’, 396/39/18, DC 3/5, PARC; Dixon, ‘The 1951 Waterside Strike – an Untold Story’; Geering, *Wrestling with God*.

⁹² Dixon, *The 1951 Waterside Strike - an Untold Story* 2001.

unofficial way.”⁹³ Walter Nash was the local MP, and supported Dixon’s relief efforts financially.⁹⁴ In his account, Dixon emphasised how informal this was, which was consistent both with the Presbyterian Church’s approach and the illegal nature of the dispute.

Studying the work of charities during the dispute demonstrates the silencing power of Regulation 8. There is evidence in memoirs and oral history that the Otago Salvation Army and some Wellington Presbyterian churches gave financial support, but this support is almost invisible in the organisations’ archives. The Salvation Army has no records of its charitable work during the dispute.⁹⁵ The Presbyterian churches have some records of their political work, but the only surviving reference to their charitable work is a single note in the minutes of St Columba’s church resolving to take up a collection.⁹⁶ The dispute does not appear in the records of Port Chalmers churches either, but no conclusions can be drawn from this silence, as churches that were actively undertaking charitable action left such little record of this fact.⁹⁷

For most families, gifts and donations were not enough; credit was crucial for their survival during the dispute. The three main bills that watersiders’ families deferred paying were hire purchase payments, grocery bills and rent. Relief committees gave priority to ensuring that watersiders would not be pressed for hire purchase payments.⁹⁸ Relief committees were generally successful in their negotiations, although there are a

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ Walter Nash to Ian Dixon, 30 July 1951, 2235/0484, Walter Nash Papers, ANZ-WO.

⁹⁵ Major Susan Jarvis, Heritage and Archives, Salvation Army, e-mail to Grace Millar, 15 July 2011.

⁹⁶ The reference to taking up a collection was from the Kirk session minutes: Kirk Session Minutes, 1951, 88-017-57/5, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Wellington and Wairarapa Presbyteries, Records, ATL. The following files mention the church’s political involvement, but not its charitable involvement: ‘Proceedings General Assembly 1951’, *Outlook*, 1951, PARC; Wellington Presbytery Minutes, 13 March 1951-14 August 1951, MSY-2166; *The Story of Saint Columba Presbyterian Church Naenae*, 1978, Wellington, pp.16-17, 88-017-58/03; St James’s Church, Wellington, Newsletters, March-August 1951, 88-017-53/2, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Wellington and Wairarapa Presbyteries Records, ATL. Other records of those three churches can be found at 88-017, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Wellington and Wairarapa Presbyteries Records; MS-Group-1000, St Andrew’s-on-the-Terrace (Wellington), Records, ATL.

⁹⁷ Presbyterian Church Port Chalmers ‘99th Annual Report for the Twelve Months Ended 30 June 1951’, 1951, 19/16 DS 7 99/48 AH 14/3, PARC; Port Chalmers Anglican Congregation of St Leonards: Records, ARC-0362; Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, St. Mary’s Branch, No. 536, Port Chalmers: Records, AG-289; Holy Trinity Anglican Church (Port Chalmers): Records, ARC-0354; Port Chalmers Congregational Church: Records, AG-141, HL.

⁹⁸ In 1949, during a short-lived dispute, the first act of the relief committee was to approach stores that offered hire purchase to their customers and ask for credit for watersiders. Auckland lockout Minutes, 1949, 94-106-11/09, Roth Papers, ATL.

few counter-examples of companies pressing individuals for hire purchase debt.⁹⁹

Decades later Johnny Mitchell could still remember the response he received:

Farmers Trading Company as far as I can remember had a fairly good reputation, Smith and Brown was another one that were fairly liberal, the bad ones I can remember – Bond and Bonds they weren't very good, Nathan Brothers.¹⁰⁰

Mitchell was describing hire purchase firms' support when he said: "generally speaking we didn't do too bad among those people".¹⁰¹ In Wellington, Max Bollinger recalled that Maple, a furniture company: "approached all their waterside and freezing works customers with hire purchase and told them that they weren't expected to make any payments until three months after they went back to work".¹⁰² Hire purchase payments were not necessarily the largest chunk of a watersiders' family budget. However, watersiders often had furniture such as tables, chairs and beds on hire purchase as well as leisure appliances that were important to a family such as a radio or gramophone.¹⁰³

The importance of credit from grocers is a recurring theme in oral history accounts of the dispute. Maureen Martin stated that she had never been in debt to her grocer before, but did go into debt during the dispute.¹⁰⁴ Kevin Ford's father told him that it took him three years to pay back their grocery bill after the dispute, and suggested that the same grocer supported many others who were locked out.¹⁰⁵ Ian Church described the situation in Port Chalmers: "Anyone in Port will tell you that the local grocer and butcher carried a lot of people through '51. So there were often quite large bills

⁹⁹ For example, H.J. Hansen to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁰⁰ John James Mitchell, interview with Douglas Crosado, Ray Grover and Bert Roth, 1977-1988, OHInt-0219/1, OHC-ATL.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² Trade Union History Project, 'A Dissenting New Zealand: a Seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey', December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL.

¹⁰³ Ted Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL; Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; *Farmers Trading Company Monthly Booklet*, January 1951, Box 4(58) 91/37, Farmers Trading Company Papers, Auckland Museum.

¹⁰⁴ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

¹⁰⁵ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

owing.”¹⁰⁶ The union did not leave grocers’ credit to chance. The Auckland executive discussed a grocer who was hostile to providing credit as part their plans for relief.¹⁰⁷

Grocers who provided credit to the families of locked-out and striking workers were offering essential material support for the dispute, which ran in contradiction to the political position of their national body. The New Zealand Master Grocers’ Federation was opposed to all wage rises and clearly stated their attitude towards the NZWWU: “Let us realise that basically there is nothing wrong with organised labour – the weakness lies not with the organisation as such but with militant sections of its membership who seek to misuse the power they had.”¹⁰⁸ Why would members of an organisation that felt this way essentially ensure that locked-out and striking workers were able to prolong the dispute?

Some grocers also saw themselves as part of the community, and extended credit on those grounds. The Hutt Valley Co-Operative was a co-operative store, with a monopoly on selling groceries in Naenae.¹⁰⁹ The Co-operative was straightforward about their position on the dispute: “Your Directors, without necessarily sharing the same views on the matter at issue between the unions and the government supported employers, were unanimous that we owed a duty to the wives and children of the men concerned both because of the co-operative ideal and the ready support which should be expected of people who serve a community venture.”¹¹⁰ In some ways the Hutt Valley Co-Operative is exceptional, as it was set up to be a workers’ co-operative. However, in areas like Port Chalmers, grocers did not need to operate as a co-operative to orient themselves to their customers.

Acting as part of their local community could also be in grocers’ economic interests. Maureen Martin’s grocer told her: “if it wasn’t for people like you I could not keep open because your money is there every week and if there is anything you need at all don’t

¹⁰⁶ Ian Church interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁰⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 16 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Retiring Presidential Address’, New Zealand Master Grocers Federation Annual Conference, 1951, MSY-5085, National Association of Retail Grocers and Supermarkets of New Zealand Inc., Records, ATL.

¹⁰⁹ Schrader, ‘Planning Happy Families’, pp.103-6.

¹¹⁰ ‘Hutt Valley Consumers’ Co-operative Society Director’s Report for Period 30th September, 1950 to 31st March 1951’, 8572-01, Scott Papers, ATL.

worry about the money. Just wait till the strike is over and you're well and truly on your feet because it's customers like you who keep this shop open."¹¹¹ The loyalty that came from credit could have long-term consequences; a Bluff watersider insisted, well into the 1960s, that all his family buy all their groceries at the store that had extended credit.¹¹² In contrast, a grocer who worked as a strikebreaker faced a boycott.¹¹³ The threat of boycott for grocers who did not support watersiders, and the promise of loyalty for grocers who did, were important economic incentives. Individual grocers, like hotels who donated to the relief committee, could have been extending credit because they opposed the regulations, or because of their sympathy for the difficult economic situation of watersiders' wives and families, but they could also have been acting in their own economic best interests.

Credit from landlords was fundamental to many families' ability to survive during the 1951 waterfront dispute. Russell French was living in a block of housing on Molesworth St in Wellington that was mostly rented to watersiders. When explaining how he survived he stated: "No one got put out of that place".¹¹⁴ In their final report, when assessing what support members who did not find new work straight away would need, the Auckland relief committee stated: "a sum of approximately £4,000 will be required as credit firms, landlords, etc. will expect and demand full payment of commitments and not on a meagre, partial basis as at present."¹¹⁵ The relief committee knew people were only paying a tiny proportion of their rent, because they were funding accommodation costs. The Auckland relief committee paid an average of £2/12/2 for an individual's accommodation costs over a four week period.¹¹⁶ This would not have paid two weeks rent for state house tenants, let alone four.¹¹⁷ Few watersiders had adequate resources to pay their rent throughout the dispute, and the relief committees did not have the funds to do it either.

¹¹¹ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

¹¹² Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹¹³ Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Frank McNulty interview with Cath Kelly, 1989, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/4, OHC-ATL.

¹¹⁴ Russell French interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹¹⁵ Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹⁶ Cashbook, Auckland Watersiders' Relief Committee, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers ATL.

¹¹⁷ 'State housing new and old – increase of rental charges' Appendix to head office circular memorandum, 31 March 1950, (R20053955), AELE-19203-SAC1/189-35.88-Part 2, SAC, ANZ-WO.

Despite the widespread non-payment of rent, there are very few accounts of evictions. The Auckland branch passed a resolution to ‘challenge the next eviction’ in May, but no evictions were mentioned in the minutes.¹¹⁸ Tom and Pat Gregory’s landlady, who had been married to a watersider, said to them ‘pay me when you can’, as an active act of solidarity.¹¹⁹ However, many of the larger landlords could not be accused of active sympathy for watersiders and did not evict their tenants. A land-lady who said ‘pay me when you can’ was reassuring and actively offered credit, but any landlord who did not evict tenants behind in their rent was in effect extending credit.

State Advances Corporation (SAC) was the landlord for the significant proportion of watersiders who lived in state housing. Two-thirds of the watersiders who received accommodation assistance from the Auckland relief committee lived in state houses.¹²⁰ None of the circulars put out by SAC to its branches in 1951, or files from that time about eviction or late payment of rent, mention the 1951 waterfront dispute.¹²¹ However, archival records do demonstrate the normal practice of SAC around rent arrears and evictions. An eviction for unpaid back rent was a serious step for SAC to take – it required the written permission of the Minister of the time, Jack Marshall.¹²² In the 1949 calendar year, only nine people were evicted from state houses.¹²³ One woman owed £78/12/0; she was 39 weeks behind on the rent. In court she agreed to pay it back at a rate of five shillings a week, an agreement she kept to ‘fairly regularly’ according to SAC staff, and this was enough for her to avoid eviction.¹²⁴ Those who were tenants in state houses may have been afraid of eviction, but in this period eviction was rare.

Eviction was a significant step for the government to take and they do not appear to have taken it against any families living in state houses. In May, miners at a government

¹¹⁸ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 7 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹⁹ Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹²⁰ Cashbook, Auckland Watersiders’ Relief Committee, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers ATL.

¹²¹ See the following files: (R18745547), AELE-19207-SAC10-5; (R20053489), AELE-19203-SAC1/47-8.4.2; (R20053372), AELE-19203-SAC1 17/5/76/1-Part 2, SAC, ANZ-WO.

¹²² Circular S.A.C., 1951/26, 17 July 1951, (R18745547), AELE-1927-SAC10-5, SAC, ANZ-WO.

¹²³ ‘Memorandum for Minister for State Advances’, 6 August 1950, (R20053489), AELE-19203-SAC1/47-8.4.2, SAC, ANZ-WO.

¹²⁴ Memorandum, SAC of New Zealand Auckland Office, 4 August 1950, AELE-19203-SAC1/47-8.4.2, SAC, ANZ-WO.

owned hostel in Huntly were told that they must pay rent or be evicted.¹²⁵ When this got publicity, Sullivan, as the Minister of Mining, felt the need to justify his decision and emphasised that miners were not being pushed for back rent, only to pay that week's rent.¹²⁶ Newspapers were generally very sympathetic to the government (which had after all criminalised publishing many forms of criticism), so the fact that Sullivan needed to explain himself demonstrated how wary the government was about eviction. This meant that they were, in effect, extending credit, and in a significant way enabling the dispute to continue.

SAC was not the only state institution that provided material support to watersiders and their families. A significant proportion of families involved in the dispute were receiving a benefit: every woman with a child under 16 (or 18 if the child was still in school) received ten shillings per week per child family benefit, which was not means-tested.¹²⁷ The evidence about the family benefit and the 1951 dispute is very confused. Kath Cole stated in her oral history that she did not receive the family benefit while her husband was in military jail for refusing to work on the waterfront during the dispute, and she attributes this to the emergency regulations.¹²⁸ However, her husband did not meet the criteria of the regulations, and by the time he had been jailed the regulations had been repealed.¹²⁹ Just two people mention the family benefit in their oral history. Tom H., an Auckland watersider, mentioned the importance of the family benefit to his family and Annie Gracie described using her family benefit for groceries: "Once I'd thingyed up in the store – and if it was over my family benefit money that was it".¹³⁰ Neither Tommy nor Pat Gregory could remember receiving the family benefit during the dispute, but Tommy Gregory was emphatic that he would have remembered if it had been taken away.¹³¹ There is no mention of the family benefit in union material and there is no

¹²⁵ 'Striking miners to pay board or get out', *The Dominion*, 21 May 1951, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹²⁶ 'Minister explains rent demands made at Miners' hostel', 22 May 1951, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹²⁷ Memorandum for: The Secretary of External Affairs Wellington, from B F Waters Chairman Social Security Commission, FAMILY BENEFIT SCHEME NEW ZEALAND, 16 January 1952, (R17489715), ADBO-16141-W2756-SS7W2756-47/10/5/1, Part 3, [Social Security Department] Head Office registered files, ANZ-WO.

¹²⁸ Kath and Gordon Cole interview with Cath Kelly, 1988, Trade Union Oral History Project, OhInt-0112/2, OHC-ATL.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s; Annie Gracie interview with Jamie Mackay, 3 April 1992, OHInt-0020/14, OHC-ATL.

¹³¹ Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

discussion of the dispute within social security records.¹³² In these circumstances, the absence of evidence points to the continued provision of the family benefit, as its elimination would have left a record. To stop the family benefit, which was paid to the woman, would have been a significant undertaking that would have left a bureaucratic and media record. Thomas Shand MP declared: “if substantial assistance to strikers was to be stopped, that wives had to be included, repugnant though that was.”¹³³ Yet the state continued to pay ten shillings a week per child to those wives.

The government’s policy towards applicants for sickness benefits during the dispute was even more contradictory. R. S. Cooke was a Hamilton miner and on 13 February, before miners went on strike, he was in a workplace accident where his testicle was crushed and he required surgery. When he applied for a benefit: “The Social Security Commission in Hamilton stated I was a miner and was out on strike”.¹³⁴ Cooke, like several others who suffered sickness and injury, both before and during the dispute, wrote to Walter Nash, who advocated on their behalf.¹³⁵ Nash was successful in his advocacy. At the beginning of July he wrote back to those workers telling them to reapply as the government had changed their position and workers would now be granted an emergency benefit.¹³⁶ Nash’s correspondence implies that Ministers made the decision to grant a benefit, which underscores how unwilling the National Party was to use the mechanisms of the welfare state in the dispute.¹³⁷

¹³² (R17489205), ADBO-16141-W2756-SS7W2759-7/2/3/21 Part 1; (R17489732), ADBO-16141-W2756-SS7W2756-48/10/5/17 part 1; (R17489331), ADBO-16141-W2756-SS7W2756-17/5/3/6A part 1; (R17489721), ADBO-16141-W2756-SSW2756-47/10/5/9; (R17489715), ADBO, 16141-W2756-SS7W2756-47/10/5/1 part 3, [Social Security Department] Head Office registered files, ANZ-WO.

¹³³ Thomas Shand, *NZPD*, 29 June 1951, p.62.

¹³⁴ R. S. Cooke to Walter Nash 4 June 1951, 2235/0367, Walter Nash Papers, ANZ-WO.

¹³⁵ See 2235/0357-0367, Walter Nash Papers, ANZ-WO.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ A few decades later social security during disputes became both an academic and political issue, see: Alan Booth and Roger Smith, ‘The Irony of the Iron Fist: Social Security and the Coal Dispute 1984-85’, *Journal of Law and Society*, 12, 3, 1985; W. J. Cole, ‘The Financing of the Individual Strikers: A Case Study in the Building Industry’, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1, 1975; J. Durcan and W. McCarthy, ‘The State Subsidy Theory of Strikes: An Examination of Statistical Data for the Period 1956-1970’, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 12, 1974; John Gennard, *Financing Strikers*, London, 1977; Laurence Hunter, ‘The State Subsidy Theory of Strikes – a Reconsideration’, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 12, 3, 1974; R. Lasko, ‘The Payment of Supplementary Benefit for Strikers’ Dependents – Misconception and Misrepresentation’, *Modern Law Review*, 38, 1975; Lesley Sutcliffe and Brian Hill, *Let Them Eat Coal: The Political Use of Social Security During the Miners’ Strike*, London, 1985; Armand Thieblot and Ronald Cowin, *Welfare and Strikes: The Use of Public Funds to Support Strikers*, *Labor Relations and Public Policy Series*, Philadelphia, 1972.

Sherwood Young argued that the police were restrained in the way they exercised the power given to them by the regulations, and this interpretation has been accepted by other historians.¹³⁸ There is plenty in this chapter that supports Young's argument. The police had the locations of relief depots, and they took no action against them.¹³⁹ The police did not arrest people for breaching Regulation 8 and rarely carried out searches in relation to Regulation 8. The only person arrested for relief activity was charged with: "selling lottery tickets to raise funds to assist de-registered waterside workers".¹⁴⁰ They were not charged under the regulations, but under the 1949 Gaming Act, and the penalty was just 10 shillings.¹⁴¹ In Wellington, the police conducted three searches in two locations that were involved with the distribution of relief, but did not arrest anyone, or prevent relief from being distributed.¹⁴² According to returns that each police district prepared after the dispute, the Wellington district was the only district where police used searches to enforce Regulation 8.¹⁴³

Arrests and searches do not tell the whole picture; the police confiscated funds, investigated those collecting and distributing relief and let them know they were being investigated. In general, watersiders' leaders appear to have been able to move around the country freely, and carry money with them.¹⁴⁴ However, at times the police intervened with the travel of people and money. Auckland watersiders tried to drive to Whakatane with relief funds, but on the way the police stopped them and would not let them get through.¹⁴⁵ At least once, when Auckland watersiders had collected a large sum of money from Mangakino workers, the police stopped the watersiders and arrested

¹³⁸ Susan Butterworth, *More Than Law and Order: Policing a Changing Society 1945-1992*, Dunedin, 2005, pp.47-52; Young, 'The Activities and Problems of the Police in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute'.

¹³⁹ 'Report of Detective Sergeant R. Jones: De-registered waterside workers' union relief depots – relief depot at Beresford Street' 21 March 1951, (R10074967), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1; Report Relative To: Attached Memorandum from Mr J.A. Foster, Private Secretary re Information Supplied by Mr Bertie Victor Cooksley re the Distribution of Meat, Allegedly to De-registered Waterside Workers, from the Garage of Mr Edward Clarence Carney, I, Allen Street, Lower Hutt, (R10074981), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/12, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴⁰ I was granted access to closed files on the condition that I not identify individuals. 'Schedule of prosecution against strikers and sympathisers', 1951, (R10074992), ADMO-W5595-21007-25/9/20/9, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² Criminal Investigation Bureau Wellington, 'Premises searched under authority regulation 18', 13 August 1951, (R10074992), ADMO-W5595-21007-25/9/20/9, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴³ Government and Public Order – Strikes: 1951 Strike: Prosecutions Returns (R10074992), ADMO-W5595-21007-25/9/20/9, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴⁴ See: Toby Hill, '1951 diary', 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

¹⁴⁵ John James Mitchell, 'Reminiscences, 1920-1960', A-168, AUL.

nobody, but confiscated the money.¹⁴⁶ The police then told the press that they had taken this action, and the articles that were printed emphasised the illegality of collecting funds and suggested that there could be further prosecutions.¹⁴⁷ This confiscation and publication lessened the union's funds and discouraged people from donating. The police also attempted to use investigation and interviews to discourage people they identified as giving material support to watersiders. They investigated the owner of a hotel after receiving a letter suggesting that he had given £500 to the relief committee, and that his hotel was operating as a base for union activity.¹⁴⁸ The police also visited the Hutt Valley Co-Operative Society, and questioned them for providing too much support for watersiders.¹⁴⁹ The police relied on the chilling effect of criminalisation and investigation without pursuing any prosecutions.

Despite the lack of prosecutions, many believed that there could be serious consequences for supporting watersiders' families. Jenny Cameron, a watersider's daughter who was 15 at the time of the dispute, describes feeling totally isolated, and attributed her neighbour's lack of support to the regulations.¹⁵⁰ The belief that contributions were illegal gave meaning to the acts both of giving food or money, and of refraining to do so. Substantial numbers of people and institutions were willing to break Regulation 8 and give money to their family, their neighbours, the union branch, and people they saw in need. This chapter has demonstrated that doctors, ministers, small businesses, large businesses, farmers and strikebreakers all broke Regulation 8 and gave money to support locked-out and striking workers. Criminalising the support of watersiders did not stop large numbers of people doing so.

Taken as a whole, the state's actions in relation to watersiders' material situation in 1951 are curious. The NZWWU characterised Holland's actions as fascist.¹⁵¹ Dick Scott

¹⁴⁶ 'Police Seize Collection for Strikers', *The Dominion*, 19 May 1951, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ 'Report of Acting Detective R. Q. Petherick, Relative to: [name omitted], Palmerston North-writes re conduct of Royal Hotel, Lambton Quay, Wellington in relation to Waterside Workers and other matters', (R10074981), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/12, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴⁹ W. J. Mason, Relative to attached memorandum from Mr J. A. Foster' 15 May 1951, (R10074981), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/12, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁵⁰ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁵¹ 'NZ Can Go To Hell', [1951], Folder 10, D-5, Bill McCara Papers, AUL; Toby Hill, Mother's Day Speech, 13 May 1951, transcribed by Constable Smith, 13 May 1951, (R10074968), ADMO-W5595-21007-1-25/9/20/2, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

makes much of comments made by William Goosman, the National Party MP for Piako. When challenged that he sounded like Hitler after criticising the watersiders in Parliament he replied: “All I have to say is that if Hitler had to deal with the same thing Hitler talked right.”¹⁵² Yet the state barely used its powers of eviction. They also paid 10 shillings a week to watersiders’ wives for every child they had, even though another MP was claiming you could not give money to women without it going to their husbands. Cabinet passed draconian regulations around the material support of watersiders, but did not enforce them. Some of this can be put down to the state not being a single entity, although that does not explain why a Cabinet Minister was so timid when it came to evicting miners who were months behind on their rent. The contradictory nature of the state’s actions raises questions about the limits of state power. Holland’s government did not use the tools of the welfare state to attack watersiders, even though it was willing to attack the freedom of the press. This government was judging how far it could go, and at what stage it would lose the popular support it needed to get strikebreakers onto the wharves and win the next election. It would be facile to suggest that because the state achieved its aims it got the level of oppression just right. Perhaps Holland’s government could have achieved its aims faster by enforcing the regulations to the letter. Perhaps if it had not passed draconian regulations the watersiders would have had less support. The widespread flouting of Regulation 8 suggests that Holland’s government knew that there were limits to its power and that it would not necessarily have gained anything by policing it more repressively.

NZWWU branches used ideas of industrial solidarity and political opposition to the government’s actions when fundraising. However, emphasising donors’ political attitudes towards watersiders, the government, or the dispute, can give a mistaken impression of the importance of people’s beliefs when giving money. Fundraising committees traded on personal relationships in order to access food and money; they also traded on economic relationships that union members had with grocers and hotels. Donors could give material support even if they did not politically support the watersiders. Those collecting for the relief committee talked of donations for workers’ families as a way to legitimise giving and, despite Regulation 8, few questioned that giving to workers’ dependants was a worthy cause. The watersiders were not isolated;

¹⁵² Scott, *151 Days*, p.89.

they existed in a complex web of relationships, and every string in the web was used to provide families with the material goods to survive for five months without wages.

The support that families received and accepted, as well as support they did not receive or could not accept, was shaped by the working-class cultures they were part of. In oral histories, narrators tell gendered stories of who gave them what and how. New Zealand historical literature is much stronger on organised welfare provisions, both state and non-state welfare, than informal working-class support networks. This chapter only explores informal working-class support within a very small context, but it offers a starting point for further research. The credit provided to families also shows the importance of existing relationships and practices for giving and receiving aid. When families received credit on groceries, rent and hire purchase payments, they were receiving important material support from companies and state institutions that often opposed the NZWWU.

Locked-out and striking workers collectively lost £3,026,635 – almost five per cent of the total wage and salary payments in New Zealand in the 1950/51 year.¹⁵³ The survival of families involved in the waterfront lockout and supporting strikes, the lack of evictions, and the low level of starvation, are historical facts with important implications. Those families could not live on air; they had depended on the wages of their breadwinners to live. Therefore, they were only able to survive because of substantial material assistance.

¹⁵³ Summary of 1951, Department of Labour Files, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO; *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1951-52*, 1952, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbooks Collection.

Chapter 3: The Family Economy

When asked about how his family survived during the dispute, one watersider, Ron S., did not seem to know. He placed responsibility on his wife, and women in general: “They managed – oh they managed – oh you’ve no idea what they could do”.¹ This mystification of families’ survival fits with the effusive, but unspecific praise of women’s role in the dispute that was explored in the introduction. Women were generally responsible for managing the family economy, and few of their accounts have survived. This chapter demystifies how families survived. First it will build on the discussion from the last chapter about credit, to talk briefly about the debt families got into. Then it will look at the three main strategies families used: increasing their income from other sources, acquiring goods outside the market economy and going without.² After looking at these individual strategies, the discussion will explore how decisions were made within families.

Three survival strategies were discussed in the previous chapter, union relief, gifts from friends and family, and debt. Debt was central to most families’ survival. Locked-out and striking families were able to get credit. Not paying rent and other important bills could save a family several pounds each week. For example, rent for a three-bedroom state house in 1951 was between £1/17/3 and £2/3/6.³ Most other strategies brought in tiny amounts compared to not paying rent, electricity, hire purchase, or the grocers.

Families faced unequal situations during the dispute, and debt illustrates this point well. Some families did not have to go into debt, as they had savings. Ted and Ida Thompson both emphasised the importance of their savings during the dispute.⁴ At the other end of the economic spectrum, some families had already used credit from their landlords and grocers before the dispute, so they were already in debt. In June 1951, Adam Rankin wrote to his fellow Auckland watersiders advising them that he had no choice

¹ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

² ‘Family strategy’ as a term has been subject of some historiographical debate, see: Kok, *Rebellious Families*, p.5; Leslie Moch, Nancy Folbre, Daniel Smith, Laurel Cornell, and Lousie Tilly, ‘Family Strategy: A Dialogue’, *Historical Methods*, 20, 3, 1987. In this thesis ‘family strategy’ is being used purely as a descriptive term for ways that families coped during this time and not presented as having any analytical power.

³ ‘State housing new and old – increase of rental charges’ Appendix to head office circular memorandum, 31 March 1950, (R20053955), AELE-19203-SAC1/189-35.88-Part 2, SAC, ANZ-WO.

⁴ Ted Thompson and Ida Thompson interviews with Cath Kelly, 1990, OhInt-0112/3; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

but to get other work, because he was over £200 in debt.⁵ Some of this debt must have pre-dated the lockout. Arnleigh Leith also had debts that pre-dated the lockout; he owed £70 when he died in mid-May 1951.⁶ The contrast between families that were already in debt in January 1951 and those that had savings underscores the very different circumstances of individual families.

Other income was as important as debt for families' survival during the dispute. While watersiders, miners and freezing workers tended to be breadwinners, their wages were not their families' only income. Mothers received 10 shillings a week family benefit for each dependent child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child was still in school), and in many working-class families the breadwinner was not the only wage earner.⁷ The range of income sources families had is shown by the following five examples from oral history interviews with children whose parents were locked out. Lully Watene was the eldest of nine children; she was the only one who had left school in 1951, and she was working at Hellabys freezing works. She, like other Auckland freezing workers, went on strike to support the watersiders, but she did not return to work when her fellow workers voted to end the strike. The family had two striking wage-earners, no working wage earners, and £3/10/0 a week family benefit for the seven school-aged children who lived at home (one of her brothers lived with her father's family). None of her family started paid work during the dispute.⁸ Gwendolene Pawson was the youngest of nine children, but by 1951 just her and one of her brothers, who had a plumbing apprenticeship, lived at home. Her mother received 10 shillings family benefit for her, and board from her brother.⁹ Robert Hannah was an only child and at school at the time of the dispute. His mother worked at Gregg's spice factory. Their family continued to have her income and 10 shillings a week family benefit.¹⁰ William Dougherty's brother and father lived with his grandfather Vera, Dougherty's aunt, who managed the

⁵ Adam Rankin [name not entirely clear] to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶ Arnleigh Leith, 'Last Will & Testament', 14 May 1951, 1951/916, (R2344304), AAOM-6031-W3265-181/1390/51, Wellington probate files, ANZ-WO.

⁷ Memorandum for: The Secretary of External Affairs Wellington, from B F Waters Chairman Social Security Commission, FAMILY BENEFIT SCHEME NEW ZEALAND, 16 January 1952, (R17489715), ADBO-16141-W2756-SS7W2756-47/10/5/1 Part 3, [Social Security Department] Head Office registered files, ANZ-WO.

⁸ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹ Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁰ Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

family economy, and could not do paid work due to her injured leg, and Vera's cousin Olive, who worked at the Cadbury factory in Dunedin. Both Dougherty's grandfather and his father worked on the Port Chalmers waterfront. Their family of four adults and two children had two wage earners locked out in 1951, but continued to have Olive's wages, and £1 family benefit for Dougherty and his brother.¹¹ Maureen Fairey and her two sisters were both at school in 1951. Her mother started paid work during the dispute. They received £1/10/0 family benefit during the dispute and her mother's wages once she started work.¹² These examples show that families had some cash income during the dispute unless the wife did not do paid work and they were either childless or supporting a non-working child who was over the age of 18. Having a regular amount of cash coming in each week gave the person in charge of the family budget, usually a woman, the opportunity to pay some bills and to assess what was most urgent and most necessary.

The cash that families got from the family benefit and from other wage earners was important, but it was already part of their normal budget. Like Maureen Fairey's mother, many women who were not already in paid work started paid work during the dispute, and their opportunities to do so varied depending on where they lived. At the end of March, Greymouth police reported that more women were looking for work than there were jobs available: "They are employed in the local steam laundry, a clothing factory, and at local hotels."¹³ In Wellington, on the other hand, women had a wide variety of options for paid work. As Melanie Nolan argued in *Breadwinning*, in this period the ideology of domesticity was undermined by the state's need to employ married women.¹⁴ Andrea Hotere found that women from Port Chalmers went to work in Dunedin factories en masse. Most women could not get work locally and were limited by the train timetable between Port Chalmers and Dunedin, so factory work was their only option.¹⁵ In some areas, there were not as many employers interested in hiring women; the only married woman who mentioned getting paid work in the Huntly coalfields interviews was Cora Bullock, who got a job at the post office because her

¹¹ William Dougherty interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹² Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹³ Inspector A. Johnston, Report Relative To: Watersiders Greymouth Other Employment, 30 March 1951, (R10074982), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/13, Registered Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴ Nolan, *Breadwinning*, pp.219-29.

¹⁵ Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.92.

father owned the building.¹⁶ The work available, and the opportunities for women to find and choose work, varied significantly between locations.

Women's unpaid work was substantial; childcare, meal provision, cleaning, and clothes washing still needed to be done, even when the women who did them were spending more time in paid work. Women with young children were least likely to be in paid work, but they also faced the biggest unpaid work-load. Wellington women took night cleaning, where that was available, because it allowed them to do their unpaid work during the day.¹⁷ While some watersiders undertook some domestic responsibilities, a straight switch of roles was hampered by both ideology and skill. The women Andrea Hotere talked to pointed out that they still maintained responsibility for the budget, shopping and managing the household, even when men did childcare and cooking.¹⁸ One man told Hotere that he deliberately did not cook well when it was his responsibility, so he would not have to continue to cook after the dispute.¹⁹ Hotere quotes Gwen Percy "I was working overtime, got home late and it was snowing. It was cold and I was miserable. I thought, well I'll get home and I'll have something nice and hot to eat waiting for me...He'd cooked me some chips and eggs. Well, have you ever had chips cooked in cold fat. There he was he had a pot of chips and some dripping on the fire...there he was stirring away with a wooden spoon and it was all mushed up and fatty. I thought this is it I can't stand it anymore".²⁰ The double-shift of paid and unpaid work that women faced was not unique to women who were taking up paid work during the lockout. Historians have detailed the careful decisions working-class women have made historically about the cost of work vs. time, and the ways that they have used money to buy time.²¹ Doreen Hewitt expressed her frustration at working hard, but still being in a very difficult financial position: "bloody hell, I'm so tired of working. I'm getting bugger all [...] and I seem to be losing everything. For the money I'm getting –

¹⁶ Cora and Charles Bullock interview with Jamie Mackay, 23 March 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/13, OHC-ATL.

¹⁷ Ida Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, OHInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL; Russell French, interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁸ Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.95.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.94.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p.93.

²¹ Benson, *Household Accounts*; Joanna Bourke, 'Housewifery in Working-Class England 1860-1914', *Past & Present*, 143, 1994; Jeanne Boydston, 'To Earn Her Daily Bread: Housework and Antebellum Working-Class Subsistence', *Radical History Review*, 35, 1, 1986; O'Donnell, 'Electric Servants' and the Science of Housework'.

I'm trying to work hard and it's not going anywhere".²² During the dispute, women's paid work did not bring in additional income that could be used to provide substitute labour, which made the prospect of paid work during the dispute less attractive for the woman doing it, but no less necessary.

Young adults who were still at school, but who had reached, or were close to, the school-leaving age of 15, were potential income earners in some families. One of the effects of the dominance of the breadwinner ideology, both historically and in historiographical analysis in New Zealand, is that young wage earners have been marginalised.²³ Rosemary Goodyear published an article about New Zealand school children workers and Erik Olssen discussed the importance of young workers for working class families in the early twentieth century, but many aspects of young workers' experience have not been studied.²⁴ Marilyn Bowman, Yvonne Grove and Bruce Malcolm all described giving up their dreams of university to start paid work, because of their families' financial situation.²⁵ But young workers, particularly young female workers, did not earn much. Marilyn Bowman described her search for work, and her success: "Tears were shed by all – after all, I was to be earning 30 shillings a week – we could eat".²⁶ Thirty shillings was only three times what her mother had received for her on the family benefit. However, even small amounts of regular income were significant for families during the dispute.

The second common strategy families used during the dispute was to acquire food, and other necessities, without having to pay. The most common examples in oral history accounts are theft, gardening and hunting. Theft was easiest, and least risky, when it was undertaken in the same way that it might have been before the dispute. Karl Crook's father was a Huntly miner and he described going to the mine with his father when the family ran out of coal:

²² Doreen Hewitt interview with Gerry Evans, 1 February 2000, author's possession.

²³ Selina Todd has done very useful work about young women's experiences as wage earners in Britain: Selina Todd, 'Poverty and Aspiration: Young Women's Entry to Employment in Inter-War England', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15, 2, 2004; Selina Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependants: Working-Class Young People in England, 1918-1955', *International Review of Social History*, 52, 1, 2007.

²⁴ Rosemary Goodyear, 'Overworked Children?', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 40, 1, 2006; Erik Olssen, 'Working Gender, Gendering Work: Occupational Change and Continuity in Southern Dunedin,' in *Sites of Gender: Women Men & Modernity in Southern Dunedin 1890-1939*, Barbara Brookes, Barbara Brookes, Robin Law, Annabel Cooper, eds, Auckland, 2003.

²⁵ Pete Gorman, *Wharfies: The Watersiders of Port Chalmers*, Variant Media, 2007; Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams', p.76.

²⁶ Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams', p.76.

I remember a very pitch black night – I was pushing one of my sister’s doll prams for the coal, [...] We decided to go down even though it was pitch black as I said – it was really black you couldn’t see. And the next minute we heard voices and Dad says “Sssh quiet son - could be the police.” But what it was was the union secretary and his son coming from the same area. They’d be pinching coal off the wagons.²⁷

Miners taking coal from the mines was well within the normal bounds of behaviour within working-class communities. Dennis Brown’s father, a Napier watersider, told his son that he had stolen sheep from local farms during the dispute.²⁸ A watersider from Auckland told a similar story of stealing sheep to a newspaper reporter in 1971: “I wouldn’t like to tell you how many sheep I swiped from One Tree Hill and other places”.²⁹ Some workers were desperate and took significant risks: “An unemployed freezing worker, Gwynne Oscar Lindsay Johnson, was yesterday sentenced to 12 months’ hard labour for shopbreaking. He appeared before the Chief Justice Sir Humphrey O’Leary in the Supreme Court, Wellington. Johnson had claimed that he was short of money because of the strike and had needed it for his wife and family. He was quite willing to believe that a shortage of money had prompted the offence, said Sir Humphrey, but no matter what the cause he could not give probation”.³⁰ Johnson was caught, which meant that his theft had a high penalty.

Vegetable gardens feature often in oral history accounts of how families survived during the dispute. Alison Pitt was the wife of a Huntly miner and her statement was typical of the way gardening was talked about: “we had a nice vegetable garden and we had hens, we survived”.³¹ David Dick, the son of a Port Chalmers watersider, also emphasised gardens: “they all had gardens and that.”³² Jenny Cameron remembered the importance of vegetables in her family: “They eked out their savings and at least there were vegetables in the garden. So starting with a knuckle or shin bone, pearl barley or split

²⁷ Karl Crook interview with Sandra Ward, 11 July 2003, 2010.122.1, Huntly Coalfields Museum.

²⁸ Dennis Brown interview with Grace Millar, 12 October 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²⁹ *Sunday News*, 17 October 1971, 94-106-10/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

³⁰ ‘Jail for Theft by Unemployed Freezing Worker’, *The Dominion*, 19 April 1951, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

³¹ Alison Pitt interview with Jamie MacKay, 3 April 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/17, Oral History Collection ATL.

³² David Dick interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

peas and veggies, a good homemade broth provided a staple diet”.³³ In this narrative, vegetables from the garden were essential to the sort of food that Cameron’s mother provided in this time of austerity.

During the dispute some men had more spare time on their hands, and if they had the land they may have been able to increase the yield of their vegetable garden, both through careful attention and planting extra crops. If a watersider had anticipated the seriousness of the dispute in late February and early March, then he could plant more root crops such as radishes, carrots, beetroot and potatoes, and these would have been ready to harvest in June and July.³⁴ The main other vegetables that could have been both planted and harvested during the dispute were greens such as kale and silverbeet, which provided fewer calories than root vegetables, but could provide both bulk and vitamins.³⁵ A supply of food that they did not have to pay for gave these narrators a sense of security. However, it does not follow that gardens were economically significant. Families with good gardens were not expecting to spend money on vegetables in the first half of 1951, therefore were not saving money when they used vegetables from their gardens. Families needed vegetable gardens to manage in normal times.³⁶ The value of the extra yield that a watersider could get from the garden was small compared to the amount of wages that he had lost.

Hunting was another way watersiders and striking workers could obtain food without paying for it. Joseph Kereopa, a Huntly miner, pig-hunted during the strike, and used his knowledge of the area to get food for his family and the relief committee. He explained how important that knowledge was: “Some people never been out of Huntly – you know they don’t know anything else but mining. You know – a lot of people didn’t know where to get pipis or where to get those sort of things you know. And like me I hunted – I did a lot of hunting before I went to the mine.”³⁷ Getting food from hunting required knowledge and skill, and was easier in areas like Huntly, than in cities,

³³ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³⁴ *Yates Garden Guide*, 63rd Edition, Auckland, 1988, pp.63-4, 8-9, 81-3.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp.87, 64.

³⁶ Kate Jordan, ‘Golden Weather Gardening: New Zealand Home Sections, 1945-1970’, MA thesis, University of Auckland, 2009, pp.59-62.

³⁷ Joseph Kereopa interview with Jamie Mackay, 27 February 1992, OHInt-0020/07, OHC-ATL.

although, Auckland watersiders ate wild rabbit and pig meat during the lockout.³⁸ Those with the skills and knowledge could use the extra time they had during the dispute to hunt.

Some watersiders and their families from Bluff spent March-May 1951 muttonbirding: hunting and processing tītī, or muttonbirds. A police report from Bluff described how they understood the limitations on muttonbirding: “These men are confined to Maoris or men who have married into the Maori race. I am informed that this work is done under Maori rites and that no one other than those belonging to the Maori race can engage in it”.³⁹ Only families with whakapapa (ancestral) connections to a tītī island, which were all small islands off Stewart Island, could travel to those islands to hunt and process tītī during the season.⁴⁰ Muttonbirding was a family activity; entire families would travel to islands off Stewart Island and live there for months until they had finished hunting and processing the tītī. Bluff had the highest Maori population of any town in the South Island; as far back as the nineteenth century, Kāi Tahu Māori had come to Bluff drawn by the work of the ports and freezing works.⁴¹ One Māori family had worked on the ports for four generations by the 1960s.⁴² The Bluff branch of the NZWWU reported that 27 watersiders from Bluff were muttonbirding during the lockout, which is compatible with police files that state “these men total about thirty in number”.⁴³ More than ten per cent of the Bluff branch went muttonbirding during the lockout; thirty families that the relief committee did not have to feed. These families would have expected to muttonbird whether or not the lockout occurred and left about two weeks after it started. The place of muttonbirding in Bluff is another example of the role of pre-existing knowledge and the local environment in watersiders gaining food without paying for it. In addition, the example of mutton-birding illustrates one of the key ideas of the last chapter: families’ pre-existing practices and relationships, in this case their whakapapa, were central to their survival during the dispute.

³⁸ Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers’ Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

³⁹ James Wilson, Report Relative To: Bluff Watersider Workers – Strike – Number of Men Who Have Obtained Other Employment, Bluff, 2 April 1951, (R10074970), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/3, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁰ Stevens, ‘Muttonbirds and Modernity in Murihiku’.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.16.

⁴² *ibid.*, pp.279-80.

⁴³ James Wilson, Report Relative To: Bluff Watersider Workers – Strike – Number of Men Who Have Obtained Other Employment, Bluff, 2 April 1951, (R10074970), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/3, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO; J. Breayley to Toby Hill, 5 July 1951, 84-058-03/19, Hill Papers, ATL.

When families had borrowed, accepted gifts, received union relief, got new income, and used savings, their only option left was doing without. When asked if there was anything that their family had given up during the dispute, two locked-out workers gave identical answers: “my beer”.⁴⁴ Giving up individual leisure activities, such as beer drinking, was widely expected of respectable men during the 1951 waterfront dispute. Ray Percy, from the Port Chalmers executive: “told the men involved so in no uncertain terms: ‘Anything you get from here is supposed to go to your family, you’re only a secondary consideration, your family comes first.’”⁴⁵ An Auckland watersider was very clear about how his family spent money during the lockout: “we never wasted it on cigarettes or booze”.⁴⁶ Max Bollinger was full of praise for the seaman who was boarding with them for turning over his entire strike-pay to Kay Bollinger:

Tommy got an allowance from the Seamen’s Union each week, and he kept none of it, he gave all of it to Kay. I think every now and then she managed to slip something back to him so that he could go and have a beer, but he was extremely attached to alcohol in the days that I knew him was Tom, and I think it was a real sacrifice to him.⁴⁷

Oral history accounts are very clear that men with families were not expected to drink during the dispute, and most men portray themselves as sticking to that behaviour in their oral histories.

In contrast, substantial evidence from other sources demonstrates that some locked-out and striking workers drank during the dispute. The union’s strategy of advertising which pubs had donated money to the relief committee was effective because they were in contact with people who would patronise compliant pubs.⁴⁸ Likewise, this account from Andrea Hotere is telling:

One publican believed that the watersiders should return to work. He made

⁴⁴ Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010; Russell French interview with Grace Millar 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁴⁵ Hotere, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers’, p.99.

⁴⁶ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

⁴⁷ Trade Union History Project, ‘A Dissenting New Zealand: a Seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey’, December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL.

⁴⁸ ‘Information Bulletin Lyttelton’, [1951], 94-106-11/06, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL; ‘Report of Detective Sergeant R. Jones: De-registered Waterside Workers’ Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street’ 21 March 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO; Ted Thompson, interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

his views known in April. The wharfies promptly instigated a very effective boycott of his business. The man in question had to leave Port Chalmers and lease his business but wharfies continued to refuse to frequent his hotel for many years.⁴⁹

Watersiders were able to institute an effective boycott in a port town, where a high proportion of watersiders had dependants; some breadwinners must have been drinking. There were also references to union members being drunk in contemporary records of the dispute. The Auckland branch meeting minutes include the statement that most members were helpful, but: “there were a few that were coming to the depot under the influence of liquor.”⁵⁰ Betty Allen, a Wellington watersider’s wife, suspected the reason he did not want her involved in the Women’s Auxiliary is that it would interfere with his ability to drink after meetings.⁵¹

The evidence that watersiders drank during the dispute is as convincing as the evidence that good breadwinners presented themselves as not drinking during the dispute. Some of those who drank during the dispute had few responsibilities, and therefore incorporated alcohol into their narratives of the dispute. Jack Mulheron, who was single at the time and had some savings from a previous job, said: “I had a bit of money in my pocket so I could afford to have a beer”.⁵² However, this does not explain the level of drinking described in the previous paragraph. A married Auckland watersider interviewed by Anna Green, who was generally very frank with his descriptions of alcohol consumption during the lockout, was asked about going to pubs: “Oh yes, but very rarely towards the end because we didn’t have the money to go then.”⁵³ This narrator was making an important point, the situation changed over the course of the dispute and men could and did have to cut back on the alcohol they drank, but that did not mean total abstinence.

Beer was not the only leisure activity families did without during the dispute, and doing without leisure came with costs. The watersiders who described giving up beer, also mention not smoking during the dispute. Women were much more likely to be smokers

⁴⁹ Hotere, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers’, p.98.

⁵⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 28 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁵¹ Nolan, ‘Shattering Dreams’, p.79.

⁵² Jack Mulheron, interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵³ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

than they were to drink in pubs.⁵⁴ When asked about stress, Kevin Ford, whose father was a Bluff watersider replied: “There was arguments of course at home, mainly we just kept out of the road us kids because things did get on top of them. Mum and Dad were both smokers [...] they couldn’t smoke as much as they wanted to”.⁵⁵ Giving up tobacco, or even cutting down had a very direct cost in this family that the children were aware of. Children also had to forgo leisure activities during the dispute, such as going to the pictures on Saturday. Film-going had a role in working-class families beyond providing children with pleasure: “As one child noted in the mid-1920s, ‘When mother wants a quiet afternoon, she says “Off to the Pictures” ’”.⁵⁶ There were twenty long, increasingly cold and wet Saturdays during the dispute. In Auckland, the women’s committee organised a trip to the movies for watersiders’ children that provided one afternoon of what was, for many families, a weekly event before the lockout.⁵⁷ For working-class families, leisure activities could be vital for balancing a difficult life, and giving them up during the dispute created stress.

Once families had cut back on leisure spending, the only place left to save money was necessities. Jenny Cameron painted a vivid picture of food deprivation in her family: “I can still see my mother scraping out the pot to get the last bit of food. My brother remembers always being hungry, and we used to drink cups of tea. At the end of 1951 he had actually lost weight”.⁵⁸ The wide-spread level of deprivation can be seen by the rise of illness among watersiders and their families. Frank Thorby was hospitalised with pneumonia and rheumatic fever, diseases of poverty and stress.⁵⁹ At one Auckland executive meeting, towards the end of the dispute, five of the twelve members who were granted release to get other paid work had one or more ill family member.⁶⁰ Winter was coming and skimping on food, clothes, and fuel risked illness.

⁵⁴ Susie Johnston, ‘Lighting Up: The Social History of Smoking in New Zealand c.1920-1962’, MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2009.

⁵⁵ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁵⁶ Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper, and Robin Law, eds, *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890-1939*, Auckland, 2003 p.183.

⁵⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 29 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁵⁸ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁵⁹ Mrs. Thorby to Alex Drennan, [1951], 94-106-11/02, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 26 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

The sort of measures that families took during the 1951 waterfront dispute, were not necessarily extraordinary. All the actions discussed so far were strategies families used to get through any other sort of downturn, such as illness and unemployment.⁶¹ Kevin Ford, whose father was a Bluff watersider, described the deprivation his family experienced: “I can remember what we had to go through – such as dad putting pieces of wood in our shoes to keep our feet off the ground.”⁶² Many men had the skills to repair boots and shoes, but most were using those skills before the dispute.

Gwendolene Pawson, whose father was a Napier watersider, also discussed shoes; not in the context of the dispute, but when she was describing what her life had been like growing up: “I remember distinctly I didn’t have any shoes hardly – the shoes I had – because I had to walk quite a way to school and in the winter – they wore – the soles wore out of them – and I used to put cardboard in them. Especially on a wet day, but the time you got down the road the cardboard was soaking wet and gone right through your shoes”.⁶³ Families could only save money by repairing children’s shoes, if new children’s shoes were something they expected to spend money on. The deprivation that some children experienced during the dispute was a normal experience for other children.

Little evidence has survived about how these different strategies fitted together in particular families. Due to the lack of personal papers from participants in the dispute, which might have contained information recorded in 1951 about how individual families survived, oral history accounts are the only way to access this information. However, few interviewees give full narratives. Flora Andersen was explicit about the holes in her memory:

[Interviewer] Did you pay your rent or did you –

Yes how did we do that?

[Interviewer] Or did you go into debt?

⁶¹ *Minding Children, Managing Men* has material from women who were managing while their husbands were ill, absent or unemployed, Helen May, *Minding Children, Managing Men: Conflict and Compromise in the Lives of Postwar Pakeha Women*, Wellington, 1992, pp.53, 83-7.

⁶² Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶³ Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

No. We never went into debt – so we must have got some sort of ... how did we do that?

It wasn't much.

That's one thing I can't remember how we paid the rent.⁶⁴

Narratives of survival rarely give a full picture of their families' budget during the 1951 waterfront dispute, even if asked; instead narrators provide fragmentary accounts, where the measures described do not match the scale of the economic catastrophe they were facing.

A few oral histories give a full explanation of how the narrator survived during the dispute. Rona Bailey gives a full account of her family's finances in her oral history. Her husband Chip drove a taxi and had to earn £30 a week, which was split £10 for him and £20 for the taxi owner. He did not go on strike, but during the dispute he often did not have time to drive the taxi, as he was so busy putting out watersiders propaganda. So in the weeks that he did not work, their family would pay the taxi owner £20 out of Rona's salary as a physical welfare officer and their savings.⁶⁵ Keith Roberts, who was a single seaman, lived with his parents during the dispute, and used his wages from his last sea journey to pay for leisure until the money ran out.⁶⁶ Those individuals who faced the least serious economic situations only had to undertake a few steps to ensure their survival during the dispute and so they were able to present an integrated account of their financial situation.

Families whose budgets were more stretched generally give less coherent accounts of their solutions. For example, Alison Pitt discussed her confidence in her family's survival because they had a garden and chickens, but that does not explain how they paid the rent, or paid for fuel.⁶⁷ Maureen Martin, whose husband was a Wellington freezing worker, remembered in some detail how she got nappies for her second child: "I was about six weeks off having Kay and there was so many things I needed for her.

⁶⁴ Flora Andersen interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁵ Rona Bailey interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union History 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁶⁶ Keith Roberts interview with Grace Millar, 19 June 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁷ Alison Pitt interview with Jamie MacKay, 3 April 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/17, OHC-ATL.

Normally you would buy two or three dozen nappies, but I had to buy them in a long roll and cut them to size and sew them all up so I would have enough for her”.⁶⁸ In 1951, nappies cost £1/14/0 a dozen at Farmers, so three dozen would have been close to a week’s wages, which was beyond many working-class families’ budgets at the best of times.⁶⁹ Many women would have made nappies in this way in 1951, even if their husbands were not on strike. In their oral history interviews, people often focus on details that had some meaning for them, rather than the strategies that were the most economically important.

Families had to take many different actions, both big and small, to survive without wages for five months. Ted and Ida Thompson, the couple whose survival strategies are most comprehensively recorded, mention that they had savings, that Ida took paid work, that Ted had a good garden, that Ida made clothes for the children, and that they received money from Ida’s parents and food from their neighbours.⁷⁰ Maureen Martin, as well as mentioning the nappies, also mentions their garden, receiving food from the relief committee, getting additional food on credit, and borrowing money from her mother-in-law.⁷¹ These accounts, although almost certainly not listing everything either family did, do give a sense of how many different aspects of families’ life were affected by the dispute. Families had to make large changes, like borrowing money and family members taking up extra paid work, but also a large number of smaller changes. Not all of those decisions remained in people’s memories decades afterwards.

Families were not unified entities when making strategic decisions; they were made up of power relationships between individuals with their own desires. For example, oral history narrators depict agency around decisions about paid work during the dispute in very different ways. Johnny Mitchell talked of his son’s role in their survival during the dispute: “Well we survived the same as others were affected, except my son had been apprenticed as an electrician, I think he was getting about two pound ten a week or

⁶⁸ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, ATL, OHC-ATL.

⁶⁹ *Farmers Trading Company Monthly Booklet*, January 1951, Box 4(58) 91/37, Farmers Trading Company Papers, Auckland Museum.

⁷⁰ Ted Thompson and Ida Thompson interviews with Cath Kelly, 1990, OhInt-0112/3; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁷¹ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

something and he put his two pound onto the table every week to keep us going”.⁷² Mitchell’s narrative gives his son credit and agency for his contribution to the family economy. However, it is not clear from Mitchell’s interview how his son’s contribution during the dispute compared to his contribution in ordinary times. Did he increase his contribution to two pounds because of the family’s economic crisis, or did the two pounds he usually contributed become more important? Young adults who left school during the dispute in order to get paid work do not describe having control over the decision. Bruce Malcolm and Marilyn Bowman’s full narratives have not survived, but in the extracts that have been quoted they treat their need to find work as an inevitability, something they neither chose nor could avoid.⁷³ Their attitude towards leaving school and starting work are similar to accounts of children who turned fifteen a few years after 1951, when their families were in a better economic position. David Dick, whose father was a Port Chalmers watersider, was still in primary school in 1951, but he described leaving school as a decision that was made for him: “I went on to Otago Boys High School stayed there a couple of years and Dad said ‘you’ve eaten your lunch enough there it’s time to – [go off to work]’ and there was jobs there – I went into an apprenticeship at Hillside”.⁷⁴ Parents’ involvement in children’s decision to leave school and start work did not change during the dispute, but the financial situation families were in affected the decisions they made.⁷⁵

Women’s descriptions of their decisions to take paid work are more varied than children’s. Mrs Greer, from Port Chalmers, described her husband coming home and telling her that she had to take paid work: “All the other women in the street are working except for you”.⁷⁶ She objected as her child was only 15 months old, but ended up taking the job; she ended her narrative “I shouldn’t have allowed him to intimidate me”.⁷⁷ Mrs Greer found work at a Dunedin clothing factory. Her narrative was about a decision she felt she had no control over. Ida Thompson, who was working as a cleaner, constructed her narrative of work in quite a different way and remembers work as

⁷² John James Mitchell, interview with Douglas Crosado, Ray Grover and Bert Roth, 1977-1988, OHInt-0219/1, OHC-ATL.

⁷³ Gorman, *Wharfies: The Watersiders of Port Chalmers* (Variant Media, 2007); Nolan, ‘Shattering Dreams’, p.76.

⁷⁴ David Dick interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁵ For example, Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010; Beverly Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁶ Hotere, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers’, p.92.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

something she chose: “Our savings were going down, and I thought I’d do my effort to help build it up again. [...] It was quite a few months I worked there.”⁷⁸ Doreen Hewitt presented a slightly different picture: “At times I found being a young bride was very, very difficult. [...] I used to think I was getting married with all the joys of spring and now I seem to be working and trying to keep people and my husband and that”.⁷⁹ She portrayed work as unavoidable – no-one was forcing her into it, she was not choosing it, it just existed. Even though families were facing similar financial situations, the power dynamics within families were different, and that affected the way women experienced paid work.

The 1951 waterfront dispute threatened both women’s roles as managers and men’s roles as breadwinners, as well as upsetting carefully balanced family economies. The way that both men and women interacted with the family economy during the dispute varied between families and reflected the roles that they had played previously. Some men continued to limit their role within the family economy to that of a breadwinner during the dispute. Ron S. made decisions about what would happen with money that was given to him for his family: “My relations – my father’s cousins she gave me ten pounds [...] “I’m not giving this to you for the union – I’m giving this to your wife.” You know what I done? I gave her £4 I gave the union £5 and I kept one for myself. And she really gets very hot over this”.⁸⁰ His wife still resented this decision over thirty years later.⁸¹ Ron S. was not alone, he was interviewed with Tom H. who told a similar story. Tom H. when given £10 for his family gave £5 to the union and took his comrades out drinking with the other £5.⁸² Tom H. was not in such dire financial straits as Ron S., as his family was living with his parents, but his mother might still have appreciated some contribution to their family economy. When asked how he managed Ron S. replied: “Manage? Ask my wife. [laughter]”.⁸³ Not all men who saw themselves as breadwinners abdicated responsibility for the family economy. Graham McCready remembered his father buying up groceries when he knew the dispute was coming.⁸⁴ McCready’s father was using money that would have normally been his to build up the collective resources.

⁷⁸ Ida Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 1990, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

⁷⁹ Doreen Hewitt interview with Gerry Evans, 1 February 2000, author’s possession.

⁸⁰ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

This did not mean that he took over the family economy during the lockout; McCready's oral history makes it clear that the burden of managing during the lockout fell on his mother.⁸⁵

Some men were more actively engaged in the family economy in normal times, and so they were more concerned with the decisions that were made during the dispute. Kevin Ford revealed how involved both his parents were in financial decisions when he talked about how things changed after the dispute "And Mum and Dad – well Dad – was allowed – was going to the pub on a Saturday night between five and six."⁸⁶ First he presented his father as being 'allowed' to go to the pub, and then corrected this to present him just going to the pub. His uncertainty showed that the decision making over money was entangled in his family, not delineated the way it was in families where men turned some or all of their money over and considered their work done.

The way most working-class families organised themselves economically meant that men could abdicate from the family economy and women could not. Pre-existing power dynamics within relationships affected how much choice women had in taking paid work during the dispute. The fact that women were ultimately responsible for ensuring a family had enough to eat meant that they were the ones who had to make decisions. Maureen Fairey's mother started paid work during the dispute. Fairey's father had previously said that no wife of his would take paid work. However, Fairey's father would rather be a man who could not support his wife than a 'scab'. Fairey's mother took paid work rather than see the family's financial situation worsen, as she could not force her husband to look for paid work away from the wharves. This was a continual point of tension in their relationship, according to the stories Fairey's mother told about the dispute.⁸⁷ Neither Fairey's mother nor father wanted to take paid work, but her father's refusal to do so meant her mother had to, because the family's finances were ultimately her responsibility.

The way that stress, responsibility and deprivation were distributed within a family during the dispute reflected existing dynamics within the family. Women's responsibility

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁷ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

to feed the family could mean that they bore the brunt of deprivation during the dispute. Maureen Fairey described her mother's memory of the dispute as follows. "But she said to me that my father never really went without too much you know – it was her – and she had to make do for us kids really."⁸⁸ Maureen Fairey communicated what it meant for her mother to do without, by recalling a conversation with her sister where her sister had said: "You know Mum never used to eat much and she said I can often remember her sitting there having a cup of tea and a cigarette, but not having a meal. And I wonder looking back if that was because there wasn't enough."⁸⁹

Deprivation and managing deprivation took an emotional, as well as a physical, toll on women. Graham McCready was asked whether his parents were stressed during the dispute; he responded:

My mother managed to get enough money to buy pork chops and we cut off the fat around the edge of the meat and left it on the plate and she burst into tears and somebody was with us at the time and he made some suggestions about how she could cook it better so that we would eat the fat and that was even worse. I remember that very vividly.⁹⁰

Graham McCready's account of dinner is a powerful indicator of the stress of trying to balance a budget. McCready does not know how his mother had managed to get pork chops, but he does paint a picture of her role in the family. When asked what she thought about the dispute he said her role was to keep things together.⁹¹ She put value and meaning into her survival strategies and it was painful when they were rejected. The responsibility and roles of survival were gendered, and so was the stress of the dispute.

Unfortunately, the narratives of women like the mothers of Maureen Fairey and Graham McCready have not been recorded. As discussed in the introduction, very few narratives of women who were married to locked-out and striking workers have survived. The accounts that have been archived tend to be of women, like Ida Thompson, who were very involved in the public events of the dispute. This is not a coincidence. Women whose main experience of the dispute was managing a shrinking budget alone were much less likely to be contacted by, or willing to talk to, interviewers.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

When interviewing Ron S., Anna Green asked if his wife would be willing to talk to her. Ron S. indicated that his wife's resentment of the way that he had behaved during the lockout meant that she would not be willing to talk about it.⁹²

Historical accounts of industrial disputes have tended to be gender segregated. For example, of the 47 recent articles on industrial disputes in major labour history journals, discussed in the introduction, almost all discussed either women and femininity or men and masculinity, but not both.⁹³ The pattern of gender-segregated discussions of industrial disputes has also been followed in recent books about industrial disputes, which tended to have a single chapter that covers women's experiences.⁹⁴ In 1951, women's and men's experiences were intertwined, something that has been obscured by existing literature which has studied women as a separate subject.⁹⁵ Within a family, the husband and wife's engagement with the family economy was interrelated. Men had freedom about how much they engaged with the family economy. How much their husband engaged with the family economy had an important impact on women's experience of the dispute, who did not have the same opportunity to withdraw. In turn, men relied on their wives to manage the family economy and would not have been able

⁹² Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

⁹³ A lot of those discussing men and men's work do so unreflexively: Bollard, "'The Active Chorus'"; Charles Fahey and John Lack, "'Silent Forms of Coercion': Welfare Capitalism, State Labour Regulation and Collective Action at the Yarraville Sugar Refinery, 1890-1925", *Labour History*, 101, 2011; Horssen Jessica van, "'À Faire Un Peu De Poussière:" Environmental Health and the Asbestos Strike of 1949", *Labour/Le Travail*, 70, 2012; MacDowell Laurel Sefton, 'The Elliot Lake Uranium Miners' Battle to Gain Occupational Health and Safety Improvements, 1950-1980', *Labour/Le Travail*, 69, 2012; Rory O'Malley, 'The Eclipse of Mateship: The "Wide Comb Dispute" 1979-85', *Labour History*, 90, 2006; Greg Patmore, 'Iron and Steel Unionism in Canada and Australia, 1900-1914: The Impact of the State, Ethnicity, Management, and Locality', *Labour/Le Travail*, 58, 2006; Michael Quinlan, 'The Low Rumble of Informal Dissent: Shipboard Protests over Health and Safety in Australian Waters, 1790-1900', *Labour History*, 102, 2012; William Suarez-Potts, 'The Railroad Strike of 1927: Labor and Law after the Mexican Revolution', *Labor History*, 52, 4, 2011; Sean Tucker and Brian Thorn, 'Railing against the Company Union: The State, Union Substitution, and the Montréal Tramways Strike of 1943', *Labour/Le Travail*, 58, 2006; Mark Westcott, 'One of the Boys or the Common Good?: Workplace Activism in the NSW Branch of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemens Associations', *Labour History*, 91, 2006. Those discussing women's work, or women during men's strikes, are more direct Camfield, 'Neoliberalism and Working-Class Resistance'; Sheila Cohen, 'Equal Pay – or What? Economics, Politics and the 1968 Ford Sewing Machinists' Strike', *Labor History*, 53, 1, 2012; Sam Davies, "'A Whirling Vortex of Women': The Strikes of Scots Herring Women in East Anglia in the 1930s and 1940s', *Labour History Review*, 75, 2, 2010; Benjamin Isitt and Melissa Moroz, 'The Hospital Employees' Union Strike and the Privatization of Medicare in British Columbia, Canada', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 71, 1, 2007; Tara Martin, 'The Beginning of Labor's End? Britain's "Winter of Discontent" and Working-Class Women's Activism', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 75, 1, 2009; Norwood, 'Organizing the Neglected Worker'; Spence and Stephenson, "'Side by Side with Our Men?"; Thornton, "'We Have No Redress Unless We Strike'".

⁹⁴ For example, Barron, *The 1926 Miners' Lockout*; John McIlroy, Alan Campbell, and Keith Gildart, *Industrial Politics and the 1926 Mining Lockout: The Struggle for Dignity*, Cardiff, 2004; Nolan, ed., *Revolution*.

⁹⁵ Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams'; Parsons, 'The Women's Waterfront Auxiliary'; Renée, 'The Women: They Were Bloody Marvellous!'.

to continue if they did not. Studying the family economy bypasses gender segregation in histories of industrial disputes, to explore the intertwined nature of men's and women's experiences.

Both this chapter and this thesis opened with quotes from men who praised women's ability to keep the family alive during the dispute, but did not know how it was done. Union branches were very active during the dispute, but much of the survival fell on individual families and in turn on women. Families were not necessarily atomised in their quest to survive the dispute; many families used their pre-existing relationships to get paid work, go mutton-birding or get groceries on credit. The networks used by families in general, and women in particular, were separate from the dispute as fought in union meetings or by relief committees. As families' survival strategies could be so removed from the formal institutions of the dispute, they have been placed outside of its history.

The 1951 waterfront dispute began as a disagreement about the standard of living of watersiders and their families. During the five months that watersiders were locked out, and other workers were on strike, the standard of living for their families was drastically reduced. Nothing that families did during the dispute was outside the normal range of working-class survival strategies. Many of the strategies that some families undertook were normal for other families. The previous two decades had been a time of austerity, and that affected how families experienced the dispute; when discussing the lockout, Ann P. associated it with the depression of the 1930s.⁹⁶ Watersiders' families were often struggling even before the dispute. Families used the skills, relationships and resources that they had to survive without wages, and filled the inevitable gap with deprivation and debt. There was one major difference between the hardship families experienced during the 1951 waterfront dispute and other hardships they might have faced during times of injury, or unemployment: workers could withdraw from the 1951 waterfront dispute and return to work.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s; Ann P. was the wife of the watersider and not formally being interviewed, but she talked during the interview and was recorded on tape.

⁹⁷ Chapter 6 will focus on the decisions that workers made to return to work and the relationship these had with the family economy.

Chapter 4: 'Your Family Comes First': Union Relief

On 16 July 1951, Toby Hill wrote to Jim Healy, the General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, outlining the NZWWU's relief efforts:

Single men were paid £1 per week in grocery orders or vouchers for meals.
Married men with no dependants with wives working only part time were given £1 per week in grocery orders.
Married men with one child were given £1/10/0 per week in grocery orders.
Married men with two children £2/0/0 per week in grocery orders.
Married men with three and four children £2/10/0 per week in grocery orders.
Married men with five and six children £3/0/0 per week in grocery orders.
Married men with seven children £3/10/0 per week in grocery orders.

In addition vegetables and meat were supplied on a pro rata basis and this was paid for by the Relief Committees. Of course in many cases we received tons of vegetables by way of gifts.

Substantial relief was given to the Miners. No money was paid out to any individual. The National policy was that the necessities of life should be supplied to families which ensured them that all homes were looked after. Substantial sums of money were spent on clothing, babies' layettes etc.¹

Hill had good reason for providing the report: the NZWWU received £28,208/11/9 from their Australian comrades during the lockout.² Hill's account emphasised the ways relief met families' needs. If it was accurate it would provide an excellent starting point for historical discussions about relief; unfortunately other sources suggest that it is too rosy a picture. The Auckland relief committee spent an average of 15 shillings a week for a family of five, which is less than a third of the £2/10/0 the family would have received if the figures above were accurate.³ Hill's figures were not necessarily fictional; they were probably based on the sum that Wellington workers received when the relief committee was able to be most generous. Hill's report demonstrated the way watersiders wished relief had been distributed, rather than reflecting the complex reality.

¹ The original used ditto marks to abbreviate some of these descriptions in subsequent lines. These were hard to reproduce clearly, so I have written them in full. Toby Hill, National Secretary, NZWWU, to J. Healy, General Secretary, Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, 16 July 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

² New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union Statement of Receipts and Payments, 1 March 1951-1 October 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

³ Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

Workers' families appear prominently in the rhetoric of relief, as it did in Hill's letter: "The National policy was that the necessities of life should be supplied to families".⁴ A notice in the 'Wellington Information Bulletin', in March 1951, instructed members: "use the food depots they are there for the benefit of you and your families".⁵ A 1952 evaluation of the waterfront dispute described donations from farmers as: "a major contribution to the sustenance of workers' families".⁶ In *151 Days*, Dick Scott talked of "money collected at Mangakino for the relief of distressed families".⁷ In his oral history, a member of the Port Chalmers executive described how he told members: "Anything you get from here [the union] is supposed to go to your family, you're only a secondary consideration, your family comes first".⁸ When those involved in the dispute talked about relief, they talked about workers' families.

As Hill's letter also suggested, relief committees used family size as the basis for their allocation of resources. A police report about Auckland relief from April 1951 stated simply: "Rations, of course, vary according to the size of family".⁹ In Wellington, one watersider was told that he did not qualify for relief, because he had two children, and only families with three or more children received relief that week.¹⁰ There were some instances where branches distributed a flat amount to all members, but basing relief decisions on family size was more common.¹¹

Families were central to both the allocation and the rhetoric of relief, but a more detailed look at the apparatus of relief complicates that picture. Each branch organised its own relief effort and more evidence has survived about the relief effort in Auckland than in any other area. Therefore, discussion of the Auckland relief effort will form the spine of this chapter, and relief practices in other branches will be discussed when there is sufficient evidence to do so. Relief in Auckland was run by a committee of six, four

⁴ Toby Hill, National Secretary, NZWWU, to J. Healy, General Secretary, Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, 16 July 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁵ 'Wellington Information Bulletin', 27 March 1951, Number 6, 94-106-10/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶ 'Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951', 1952, 94-106-10/3, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷ Scott, *151 Days*, p.170.

⁸ Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.99.

⁹ Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹¹ Memorandum, 'Mass Meeting of Miners at Miners Hall Runanga 22/3/51, Payment Made to Each Member Present', 23 March 1951, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO; Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.99.

watersiders and two wives of watersiders. The Women's Auxiliary and the Māori committee also undertook some relief work.¹² No records of how the relief committee was formed have survived, but it reported regularly to the branch executive.¹³

In Auckland, food parcels were the centre of the relief effort.¹⁴ There is no record of how or why the committee decided to distribute its resources in this way.

One advantage of providing relief as food parcels was the ability to buy in bulk.

Another, as implied by Hill in his letter to Healy, was that it ensured that relief money was spent on groceries. In Port Chalmers, where most relief was provided as money, the fears of those who advocated providing relief as goods, namely that money would not be spent on groceries but on other items, appear to have been realised. In oral history interviews, several people implied that some watersiders in Port Chalmers spent their relief money at the pub.¹⁵ By distributing food parcels, a relief committee was able target its resources at the needs it saw as most fundamental.

The Auckland relief committee needed three things to distribute food to locked-out watersiders: physical spaces to collect and store food, suitable transport, and labour. During the lockout, labour was not in short supply, but physical spaces were harder to access. The relief committee turned the watersiders' band practice rooms into the central relief depot.¹⁶ Then they expanded their operation; the relief committee opened their first sub-depot in Mt. Albert on 16 March 1951, and by the beginning of April they had a main depot and 13 sub-depots throughout the Auckland suburbs.¹⁷

¹² E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹³ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meetings of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁴ E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06; Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁵ Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.99.

¹⁶ Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 16 March, 2 April 1951, 94-106-11/01; Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

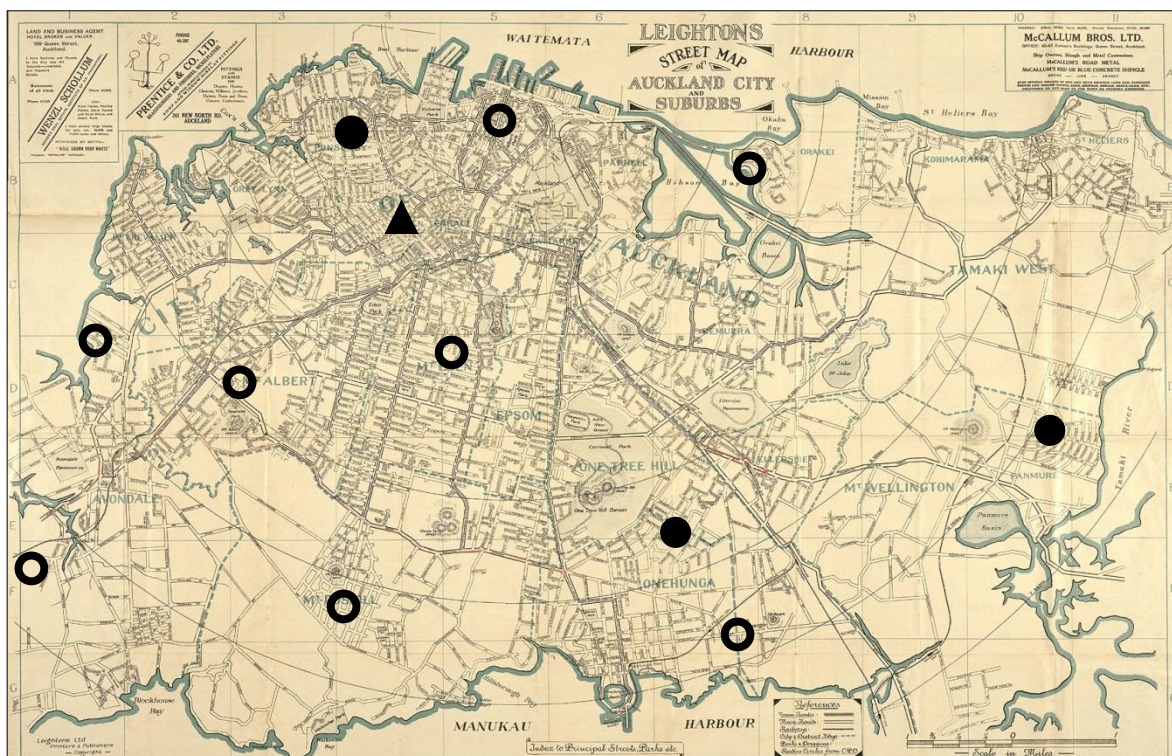


Figure 7: Map of Auckland Relief Depots

Leighton's street map of Auckland City and suburbs. [Auckland], Leightons, ca.1950, New Zealand Maps 6409, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Key

- ▲ Main Depot, accurate location
- Sub Depot, accurate location
- Sub-Depot, suburb (exact location not known)

Figure 7 shows the known and likely locations of the main depot and sub-depots run by the Auckland relief committee during the dispute; two depots were located outside the map's boundaries in Devonport to the North and Onehunga to the South.¹⁸ Sub-depots allowed the relief committee to provide food parcels to members living across Auckland's newly sprawling suburbs: "This was regarded as more efficient, and reduced the burden of transport costs from the more distant suburbs into town".¹⁹ This network of depots was labour intensive: 37 men worked at the main depot, 59 at the sub-depots and a further 15 drove materials between depots.²⁰ Each depot was run by its own sub-

¹⁸ Sources for the locations of the depots are as follows: Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 16, 22 March 1951, 2 April 1951, NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 16 March 1951, 94-106-11/01; Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL; 'Report of Detective Sergeant R. Jones: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street' 21 March 1951, (R10074967), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, ANZ-WO.

¹⁹ 'Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951', 1952, 94-106-10/3, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁰ E Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

committee, which also took responsibility for collecting money and distributing propaganda in the area.²¹

Distributing relief also required branches to set up transport systems. Food had to be collected and distributed around the relief depots several times a week. The Auckland relief effort was based on using members' cars.²² In just a month the Auckland relief effort spent nearly £200 on petrol, tyres and car repairs, which was almost as much as it spent on butter (butter was one of the staples of food relief).²³ The Auckland relief depots were an extraordinary logistical undertaking. With no experience in food distribution, the relief committee set up a distribution network and a transport system that, at their peak, provided food to 1,540 locked-out workers and their families.²⁴

The Wellington and Lyttelton branches of the NZWWU were the other two largest branches and faced similar logistical challenges. The Lyttelton relief committee set up five relief depots and the Wellington relief committee had at least two.²⁵ In Wellington, the relief committee had good relationships with a number of small businesses, which assisted with distributing food. Rene and Doug Hare ran a small trucking company and sympathised with the union; their trucks drove up and down the lower North Island to collect produce and bring it back to Wellington.²⁶ Friendly grocers were also part of the relief effort in Wellington. Detective Dave Patterson reported: "I understand that the union has been issuing orders to the value of about £150 per week on the "Star" Stores, Grocers, 158 High St, Lower Hutt, and that these orders have been met by cash payments by the union."²⁷ The Wellington relief committee did not have to set up an entirely new supply network, because of the relationships that it built with local grocers.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 28 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²³ Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁴ Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁵ Rene and Doug Hare interview with Kerry Taylor, OHColl0861; Frank McNulty interview with Cath Kelly, OHInt-0112/4, OHC-ATL.

²⁶ Rene and Doug Hare interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl0861, OHC-ATL.

²⁷ Detective Sergeant Dave Patterson, Memorandum Relative To: The Waterfront Dispute, 30 March 1951, (R10074981), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/12 Part 1, ANZ-WO. Other evidence of this practice includes: Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL; Hutt Valley Consumers' Co-operative Society, 'Director's Report for period 30th September, 1950 to 31st March 1951', 8572-01, Scott Papers, ATL.

The way relief committees operated in different areas depended on the resources they had. Branches of the Seamen's Union organised relief very differently from branches of the NZWWU, because they had different resources and were meeting different needs. When seamen went on strike and left their ships, they were walking away from their beds and they were carrying the wages from their latest voyage.²⁸ The Seamen's Union called on members who had savings to lend that money to the relief effort, and paid Post Office Savings Bank rates of interest. Then they lent this money to members who needed relief at the same interest rate.²⁹ This limited the type of relief they provided, and in Auckland the Seamen's Union referred those with families, or who needed more relief, to the watersiders' relief committee.³⁰ The Seamen's Union needed to provide relief as a loan, as they funded relief through debt.

During the first few weeks of the dispute, members of the Women's Auxiliary and other women volunteers worked with the Auckland relief committee in the central relief depot.³¹ In mid-March, the relief committee excluded women from the relief depot. The minutes of the executive meeting reveal that: "Members of the union who were assisting the relief committee had heard statements made by the women that some members were getting more than others. The members were incensed at this and decided that the women were not able to carry out the work required such as lifting sacks of potatoes, etc. and considered that in the interests of unity it would be far better for them not to be there."³² The branch executive discussed the relief committee's exclusion of women, and endorsed it after some debate.³³ The relief committee put forward several different reasons for its decision. First that: "owing to the arduous nature of the other work that the women's tasks had reached the stage of making tea and sitting around".³⁴ The other two reasons relief committee members gave for excluding women were that women gossiped too much, and that men's crude language

²⁸ For example, Keith Roberts interview with Grace Millar, 19 June 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²⁹ 'Statement made by Frederick Charles O'Connor', 9 July 1951, (R397504), AANK-W32853-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO; Minutes of Lyttelton Seamen's Union Special Meeting, 17 April 1951, Box 26, D-8, Seamen's Union Auckland Branch records, AUL.

³⁰ Notes about 1626 and 16509, 17 April 1951, 80-307-15/11, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, ATL.

³¹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 20 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

made the space inappropriate for women.³⁵ In the discussion about the decision, women were portrayed as being unable to do masculine work, and a threat to men's ability to do that work in the ways that they had been used to. The relief committee continued to work with two women, Mrs Ridgway and Mrs Carter, but no record of what these two women did has survived, except that their work was valuable.³⁶ Their status is also unclear, the relief committee's final report lists them as members, but they do not seem to have been part of the decision to exclude other women from the relief depot.³⁷

The Auckland relief committee argued that women were unable to do the work of distributing food, but there is no evidence that this view was held by other organisations that distributed food or money. Labour historians have rarely studied the work of assembling food parcels; in a rare example Bruce Scates demonstrated that during the First World War creating food parcels was constructed as women's work.³⁸ During the 1951 dispute, distributing food at the Auckland central relief depot was masculine work only because the watersiders decided that it was. When defining the work of relief, and why women were not suitable for it, the relief committee emphasised moving sacks of potatoes and ignored the time that must have been spent creating smaller parcels.³⁹ The watersiders constructed relief work so that it resembled the work they were used to: waterfront work also involved moving heavy sacks.

The relief committee put considerable effort into ensuring that the central Auckland relief depot was organised as a male workplace. In mid-April, 40 watersiders waited outside while the depot was closed from 12-1pm. The relief committee justified this closure in terms of the pattern of work they were used to: "the depot had been working from an early hour and they desired a break for lunch and their hours were advertised as

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 20 March, 21 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 20 March, 21 June 1951, 94-106-11/01; E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

³⁸ Bruce Scates, 'The Unknown Sock Knitter: Voluntary Work, Emotional Labour, Bereavement and the Great War', *Labour History*, 81, 2001.

³⁹ Auckland Waterside Workers Union Executive, Minutes, 20 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL; Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

being closed from 12 to 1”.⁴⁰ In addition, only union members, not other members of their families, could collect rations from the central relief depot. When some members of the NZWWU were sent to jail, the executive passed the following motion: “Resolved that the central depot deliver rations to wives of men serving prison sentences”.⁴¹ The relief committee ensured that relief work was masculine work and the central relief depot was a masculine space throughout the dispute.

One of the effects, possibly the intention, of requiring men to pick up relief, was that it maintained the breadwinner model. Men brought food home to their families, just as they had brought wages home before the dispute. This meant that if a man decided his family did not need relief, there was nothing his wife could do about it. Doreen Hewitt described her husband’s attitude towards relief: “One time he [her husband Jimmy Hewitt] came home and he said “oh they were giving out chickens.” [...] Jim said to give them to people who deserve them”.⁴² Doreen Hewitt would have appreciated one of the chickens. Ron S. spent his days organising relief, but did not take any for his family of four children, because he thought other people needed it more. His wife disagreed.⁴³

Sub-depots required using spaces in new ways as the branches did not have empty spaces scattered conveniently around the city. Instead, they turned to the private spaces of union members: houses and garages.⁴⁴ Lully Watene Heemi’s family house was the Panmure relief depot: “Our house became a place for collecting veges and meat, and whatever was – they managed to get from outside to bring in and people would come and you know collect on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday”.⁴⁵ Lully Watene

⁴⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 14 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴¹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 31 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Paper, ATL.

⁴² Doreen Hewitt interview with Gerry Evans, 1 February 2000.

⁴³ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

⁴⁴ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Rene and Doug Hare interview with Kerry Taylor, OHColl0861, OHC, ATL; Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers’ Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1; Detective Sergeant W. J. Mason; Report Relative To: Attached Memorandum from Mr J.A. Foster, Private Secretary re Information Supplied by Mr Bertie Victor Cooksley re the Distribution of Meat, Allegedly to De-registered Waterside Workers, from the Garage of Mr Edward Clarence Carney, I, Allen Street, Lower Hutt, (R10074981), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/12 Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁵ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

Heemi described a system that had used women's work in a way the central relief depot did not: "They were people you know – the wives of um they took turns at doing that – you know they were waterfront workers' wives and families that knew the families that were coming to get the food."⁴⁶ The Watene home may have operated as a food distribution centre, but it was also still a home, and therefore it did not become a masculine workspace during the dispute.

The relief effort outside of Auckland has not been as well served by the archive making it hard to reconstruct the way gender influenced relief work in other branches. Figure 8, taken from *151 Days* suggests that in Wellington relief work was as masculine as it was in Auckland. Two men brought their sons to a group photo of the Wellington relief depot, which emphasised the masculine nature of the space. Wayne Townsend suggests, without a reference, that the Women's Auxiliary ran relief in Lyttelton.⁴⁷ Frank McNulty was very involved in Lyttelton and he described the Women's Auxiliary as playing a limited role. His account is more direct, specific and convincing.⁴⁸ Fragments of evidence suggest that not all relief depots were solely masculine spaces; for example, in the Waikato any family member could collect food from the relief depot, not just miners.⁴⁹



Backbone of the struggle were the relief committees. Freezing workers and watersiders in a Wellington depot (above) and two scenes (below) repeated in all main ports and mining towns.

Figure 8: Wellington relief committee, image from *151 Days*. Scott, p.166.

In order to maintain the Auckland central relief depot as a masculine space, the relief committee had to collectivise the work of shopping for food and perform it themselves. Under normal circumstances, women were responsible for shopping.⁵⁰ During the

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Townsend's source was probably Scott's *151 Days*, which made a similar claim. Scott, *151 Days*, p.169; Townsend, 'From Bureau to Lockout', p.268.

⁴⁸ Frank McNulty interview with Cath Kelly, 1989, OHInt-0112/4, OHC-ATL.

⁴⁹ 'Waikato Miners Union Information Bulletin', No. 5, [1951], 94-106-41/09, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁵⁰ Holland, 'Some Aspects of Home-Making', pp.31-47.

dispute, the Auckland relief committee's priorities dictated what over a thousand families ate. It is possible that providing feedback on what to buy was one of the roles of the two watersiders' wives who worked with the relief committee. Most women, however, were excluded from working at the central depot, where decisions were made, and could not even give informal feedback, as they did not pick up the food.

Three sources that reveal some aspect of what food families received during the dispute have survived: a police report describing the food that a family of three got for one week, the relief committee's accounts recording information about what was purchased over a one-month period, and two Auckland relief committee reports listing the total amounts of various goods that the relief committee distributed.⁵¹ Food had been rationed from 1942 until 1950. The police's description of the card that the relief committee used to keep track of what groceries a watersider had received sounds very similar to a ration card, so the rationing system appears to have had some influence on the relief committee.⁵² Comparing the quantities of food the relief committee provided with what had been available when food was rationed gives some meaning to the decisions of the relief committee.

Butter was key to the relief committee's food strategy; they spent £103/10/8 on butter on 27 April, and then another £73/10/0 a week later.⁵³ Butter was an important part of New Zealanders' diet at the time, but its meaning was more significant than its role as a fat. Frances Steel has argued that butter was central to New Zealand's image of itself as a land of affluence.⁵⁴ In 1951, butter was newly freely available; it had been rationed from 1942 until 1950 and adults had been limited to just half a pound of butter a week.⁵⁵ In mid-April, the relief committee provided a family of three with one and a half

⁵¹ Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06; Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL; Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵² Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO; New Zealand Rationing Office, 'Ration books', 1942-1949, MS-Papers-2451, ATL.

⁵³ Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, Roth Papers, 94-106-11/05, ATL.

⁵⁴ Frances Steel, "New Zealand Is Butterland", *New Zealand Journal of History*, 39, 2, 2005, p.191.

⁵⁵ 'The Food Stuff Rationing Coupon Notice 1946', *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 October 1946; 'The Food Stuff Rationing Coupon Notice 1947', *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 October 1947; *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1950*, 1950, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbooks Collection.

pounds of butter a week.⁵⁶ The relief committee reported purchasing a total of 34,048 pounds of butter. This could have provided just under 3,500 people with half a pound of butter a week for the twenty weeks of the dispute. Unfortunately no record of how many people the committee was buying for has survived, just that at the peak they were providing for 1,540 watersiders and their families, which is roughly compatible with distributing half a pound of butter per person per week.⁵⁷ The relief committee appears to have prioritised providing families with at least the same amount of butter that they would have received under rationing.

The Auckland relief committee also put considerable effort into purchasing and butchering meat.⁵⁸ Meat was rationed from 1944 until 1948; initially, the meat ration system was designed to provide two and half pounds of meat per adult per week (with half rations for children under ten), and in 1945 that was reduced slightly.⁵⁹ While meat was rationed, an adult was allowed between four and five pounds of meat to every pound of butter. In total, the relief committee bought four and half pounds of meat for every pound of butter it bought.⁶⁰ This suggests that families had access to a roughly comparable ratio of meat and butter from relief as they would have had under a rationing system. However, for the one week in which we have a complete record of the rations of a family of three, that family received a total of just one and a half pounds of steak, much less than the rationed amounts.⁶¹ The relief committee's supply of meat to families was not steady throughout the dispute.

As well as butter and meat, the Auckland relief committee provided vegetables, bread and some other groceries. In mid-April, this was a week's worth of rations for a family of three:

⁵⁶ Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁷ E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁵⁸ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 4 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL; Frank Barnard interview with Shaun Ryan, 8, 9 July 1999, Trade Union Oral History Project, OH-Int-0478/30, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁹ *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1946*, 1946, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbooks Collection; 'Meat Rationing Revocation Order 1948', *New Zealand Gazette*, 30 September 1948.

⁶⁰ E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, Roth Papers, 94-106-11/06, ATL.

⁶¹ Detective Sergeant R. Jones, Report Relative To: De-registered Waterside Workers' Union Relief Depots – Relief Depot at Beresford Street, Auckland, 21 April 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

Monday
½ loaf of bread
1 small cabbage or 3 carrots
6 apples
½ lb. of butter
4 pears

Friday
2 loaves of bread
5 apples
3 carrots
½ lb. butter
6 potatoes
1 ½ lb. steak⁶²

Wednesday
½ loaf of bread
½ lb. of butter
6 large potatoes
3 carrots
¼ lb. of cheese
½ lb. tin of jam
¼ lb. of tea
½ lb. of rice

When giving out rations the relief committee divided food into five groups: butter, meat, bread, vegetables and other groceries, and the food this family received for this week reflected that.⁶³ It was also compatible with the bulk quantities described in the relief committee's final report; the relief committee bought approximately one loaf of bread for each half pound of butter.⁶⁴

The amount of vegetables received by this family in that week fits the Auckland relief committee's final report. They purchased 111,000 pounds of potatoes, 16,920 pounds of pumpkins and over 1,000 sacks of other vegetables: greens, onions, kumara, carrots and parsnips.⁶⁵ The relief committee's emphasis on providing vegetables, and the prominence of families' own vegetable gardens in oral history, stand somewhat in tension with each other. However, they probably just reflect that the access families had to gardens varied. Kate Jordan demonstrated that those who lived closest to the city were less likely to have access to a garden.⁶⁶ Young couples who lived in rooms, because they had been unable to find houses, could not garden either.⁶⁷

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Jordan, 'Golden Weather Gardening', p.51.

⁶⁷ Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010; Russell French interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

The most mysterious decision the Auckland relief committee made was their purchase of tea. The final report of the relief committee claims that they bought 48,939 pounds of tea.⁶⁸ This is more than the total weight purchased of butter and cheese combined. The amount seems extraordinary, but the preliminary report of the relief committee, written three weeks earlier, claims that at that point they had bought 48,408 pounds, which makes it difficult to dismiss the figure as a typing error.⁶⁹ While New Zealanders did consume a lot of tea in this period, the average annual consumption was 6.8 pounds per person.⁷⁰ If the relief committee did buy 48,939 pounds of tea, they could have provided 17,000 adults with their regular tea consumption for the length of the dispute. There are a few explanations for this stupendous amount of tea: it could be some kind of recording error, some of the tea they got could have been damaged or stolen, they could have made a purchasing error and ended up with far more tea than they needed, or they could have valued a supply of tea that much. There is no further evidence or explanation, but it does suggest that the relief committee was open to either whims or errors.

The Auckland relief committee did not provide members with cash, but families needed more than food. The relief committee worked hard to negotiate credit for union members, and therefore minimise the bills that they needed to pay.⁷¹ When members were pressed for payments the relief committee paid some bills directly.⁷² From 17 April to 16 May 1951, the Auckland accounts have survived and contain careful notes about each grant: who the money was paid to and the name and bureau number of the man on whose behalf the payment was made.⁷³ The relief committee provided grants for 157 watersiders in that four weeks, and the average payment made was just over four pounds, which was about a tenth of what a watersider would earn normally.⁷⁴ Most grants were for accommodation expenses and the relief committee granted a total of £433 for rent, board and mortgage payments.⁷⁵ Most of those seeking assistance for accommodation expenses were behind on their rent, either to the SAC or to private

⁶⁸ E Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁹ 'Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁰ *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1951-52*, 1952, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbooks Collection.

⁷¹ John James Mitchell, interview with Douglas Crosado, Ray Grover and Bert Roth, 1977-1988, OHInt-0219/1, OHC-ATL.

⁷² Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

landlords, but two watersiders had their mortgages paid by the relief committee.⁷⁶ Gas and electricity charges were the other major expenses the relief committee met, for which it paid a total of £90.⁷⁷ The relief committee also provided firewood for those who could use it.⁷⁸ Payments for rent and power accounted for 85 per cent of grants to individuals. The relief committee also granted money for a small number of health needs; there are entries that are marked 'wife's treatment', 'anti-tetanus injection', and 'doctor's visit'.⁷⁹ There are dietary health provisions; twice, in the records that have survived, the committee bought orange juice, spending a total of 8/2d, but this entry is carefully labelled 'for diet'. Similarly, the relief committee spent 2/7d on cod liver oil, which would not be enough to provide for everyone, so must have been meeting a specific family's needs.⁸⁰ The only other expenses the relief committee assisted with, besides accommodation, power and health needs, was servicing debt. They helped no more than five watersiders service their debt, although the records about debt are unclear.⁸¹ The relief committee had to define families' needs narrowly as they were working with limited funds.

As we have seen, both in rhetoric and in the way need was defined, relief was organised around families. Despite this, single men's needs had to be met as well. The Auckland relief committee was more flexible with its definition of accommodation expenses for single men; they made grants for board, meals, and for a housekeeper. The Auckland relief committee granted single men money to buy the labour that the wives of watersiders did within families. These grants tended to be quite substantial, and in some cases regular. W. McGee, who received a grant for a housekeeper, received three payments in the four weeks covered by the cashbook.⁸² Only seven men had grants of this kind, which suggests families' needs for cash were prioritised above single men's.

The Auckland relief committee interviewed members at the central relief before granting additional relief to pay bills.⁸³ Only a watersider, not any other members of his

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ E. Williamson, Relief Committee Report, July 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁹ Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 14 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

family, could apply to the relief committee for additional relief to pay bills.⁸⁴ The central relief depot was not an ideal venue for interviews about relief; in a late March meeting of watersiders, reluctance to take up relief was attributed to worries about privacy. Workers were reassured there was no need to be reluctant to take up relief: “as all records will be destroyed after the dispute and all matters that are discussed with the members are confidential”.⁸⁵ At meetings of the union executive, discussions about privacy for relief interviews recurred after that first reassurance in late March. Two weeks later the executive discussed the interviews, and stated that congestion in the band room made it difficult for them to be completed satisfactorily. They then passed a motion that all interviews should take place in private.⁸⁶ Towards the end of the dispute the executive ruled out interviewing people for relief in the sub-depots as there would be insufficient privacy.⁸⁷ If the Auckland watersiders considered going to members’ homes, then this discussion was not minuted. The relief committee had no opportunity to talk to members’ wives, who would probably have been able to provide more complete information about what the family needed than their husbands.

Relief committees were not the only union structures that met the needs of locked-out families during the dispute. In Auckland, both the Māori committee and the Women’s Auxiliary fulfilled some relief functions. The primary purpose of the Māori committee of the Auckland branch was to encourage Māori not to work on the wharves as strikebreakers.⁸⁸ By April, there was significant conflict between the leaders of the Māori committee, George Pitman and Steve Watene, and the head of the relief committee, Mr Collins. At the time of this conflict, Pitman and Watene stated “if the union wished the Maori committee to carry on with their relief work they would need better treatment than they had had on this occasion”.⁸⁹ Unfortunately the nature of the conflict was not recorded. Shortly afterwards Pitman and Watene requested, and were granted, that the

⁸⁴ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 14 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁵ Luckily for this project this statement was not followed through and some Auckland relief files survived. NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 22 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁶ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 12 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 21 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁸ S. Watene to The Chairman, [1951], 94-106-09/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 14 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

Māori committee have the discretion to respond to Māori members of the union.⁹⁰ No records of how the Māori committee used these discretionary powers have survived. Pitman and Watene thought that they could better consider needs of Māori members than the relief committee, which suggested that the relief committee met the needs of Pākehā watersiders better than they met the needs of Māori watersiders.

The Auckland Women's Auxiliary took a formal role in meeting the needs of new mothers and children. The Auckland relief committee provided £100 for layettes for new babies, which the Women's Auxiliary assembled and distributed.⁹¹ At least in some areas, women's auxiliaries collected and distributed second-hand children's clothing.⁹² Very little evidence of how families' clothing needs were met during the dispute has survived, unlike repairing men's boots, which was celebrated in *151 Days*.⁹³ The relief tasks that women's auxiliaries took on, such as distributing children's clothing and providing for babies, were about meeting the needs of children, which was sometimes expressed as meeting the needs of their mothers. Despite the emphasis on families in the relief committee's stated purpose, the work of meeting the specific needs of children was given to a peripheral organisation. There was no attempt to meet the specific needs of women, although the relief committee provided haircuts and boot repairs for men.⁹⁴

So far this chapter has examined the distribution of relief from an institutional perspective, but has not discussed members and their families' experience of receiving relief. Women who talk about relief in their oral history interviews emphasise its inadequacy. Maureen Martin, whose husband was a Wellington freezing-worker, talked of receiving relief by voucher: "25 shillings a week we would get [from the strike committee], for groceries, now that wasn't very much. That groceries order had to be used at a little shop designated by the strike committee. We were getting low on vegetables and that from the garden, tomatoes were still growing and onions, so they

⁹⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 24 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹¹ Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05; 'Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951', 1952, 94-106-10/3, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹² NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 22 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹³ Scott, *151 Days*, p.166.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.167; Auckland Waterside Workers Union Executive, Minutes, 9 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

were useful but the 25 shillings wasn't really enough."⁹⁵ Martin got additional groceries on credit. Flora Andersen, whose husband was locked out from the Auckland wharf, gave this account of relief: "Yeah well I don't know what organisation it was, but we used to get a handful of – um – bits of things in. We never really got the things that were necessary – like we didn't get eggs or meat – occasionally we got a bit of meat".⁹⁶ Andersen's memories of the relief she received reflect archival records of what was distributed. Her account also shows the lack of connection between the relief committee and the women who were preparing meals with the food provided; Andersen does not remember the organisations, but does remember her dissatisfaction with the food they selected.

The relief effort was a massive undertaking; the Auckland relief committee spent £22,290/4/1.⁹⁷ However, this was much less significant an amount when divided among the 1,500 men who received relief. The Auckland relief committee was trying to meet workers' needs with less than ten per cent of the wages watersiders had lost.⁹⁸ They spent an average of 15 shillings a week for a family of five, and if three of those family members were children under the age of 16, that family would be receiving twice as much from the family benefit than they received from relief.⁹⁹ One of the reasons relief has a low profile in oral histories is that it was not as significant, financially, as other strategies families used.

The other reasons for relief's low profile in oral history accounts is that watersiders seem to have felt ambivalent about it. Those who did not accept relief emphasised this as a virtue. Ray Stratton had begun work in another industry before the end of the dispute, without asking for clearance from the union. After the end of the dispute he wrote to the Secretary of the Auckland branch, asking for that clearance, and emphasised that he had not taken relief:

⁹⁵ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

⁹⁶ Flora Andersen interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹⁷ Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹⁸ 'Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL; Department of Labour, Strike Return summary, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁹⁹ Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

In all that time I never drew a penny from the union in any shape or form, indeed at the beginning I took 19/6d worth of groceries along to the depot from self help. Soon afterwards I had my seaman son and his wife to keep and baby. Then also we gave a roof and tucker to stranded seamen for a time, some weeks, at our desire, all gratis of course. At first, in order to help you, I could not let my son draw on your rations, but he did so afterwards.¹⁰⁰

The Wellington dispute newsletter directly instructed people to take relief, which suggests some in need were not doing so.¹⁰¹ The Auckland relief committee addressed a members' meeting to encourage people to receive relief, because they believed that people were reluctant to come forward.¹⁰² Need led many watersiders to overcome their reluctance. The relief committee served 1,540 members at its peak, which was roughly 70 per cent of Auckland members.

Tom Gregory did use the relief depot during the dispute, and his ambivalence about it is clear in the way he tells his oral history:

We used to battle along. But if I needed anything I'd get it. I used to bring home things – some meat sometimes you'd get it – something like that. [...] You never turned anything down in trades hall – someone would come down with say a sack of lemons or something like that – or onions or something like that and you'd be in and take it home.¹⁰³

Part of the way through the narrative Gregory switched from 'I' to the more distant 'you'. He also emphasised aid where one watersider was providing to another, rather than what he received from the relief committee. In the 'Auckland Watersiders Information Bulletin' the relief committee was explicit about why it thought members were reluctant to accept relief: "The committee desires to impress on all members that this is not charity. The Distribution of goods to necessitous cases is a responsible, legitimate Trades Union function. So if you require assistance, don't let stupid false pride prevent you from obtaining it. Contact the Relief Committee immediately."¹⁰⁴ The

¹⁰⁰ Ray Stratton to Mr Jones, 23 July 1951, 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁰¹ 'Wellington Information Bulletin', 27 March 1951, Number 6, Roth Papers, 94-106-10/06, ATL.

¹⁰² NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 22 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁰³ Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹⁰⁴ Emphasis in original, 'Auckland Watersiders Information Bulletin', No. 5, 5 March 1951, 94-106-10/07, Roth Papers, ATL.

emphasis put on relief not being charity, strongly suggests that many watersiders felt that it was, and avoided it accordingly.

During the dispute, relief committees deliberately avoided any connection between their work and welfare structures that union members would recognise. Applying for welfare was usually the responsibility of women; the union provided relief to men.¹⁰⁵ Women ran welfare organisations at this time; union relief was run by men.¹⁰⁶ Home visits by social work staff were a standard part of welfare practice; union relief largely avoided watersiders' homes.¹⁰⁷ Consciously or unconsciously, relief committees knew what historians have argued: that welfare was a key way in which the class system was reproduced.¹⁰⁸ By excluding women and avoiding homes, the Auckland relief committee attempted to provide members with relief in a way that reproduced class awareness on their terms. The effort union branches put into persuading members that relief was different from welfare, and the evidence of men who did not take up relief, suggests that the relief committees were not entirely successful in this project.

Writing the history of union relief efforts during 1951 is a challenge, because of the transient nature of the relief efforts. The Auckland relief committee set up a distribution system with one central depot and thirteen sub-depots; they bought and distributed significant quantities of food and evaluated and met other needs. This whole system was dismantled within three weeks of the end of the dispute. It was not designed to last or leave a record.¹⁰⁹ Relief was the responsibility of individual branches and relief committees had many decisions to make about how to best use their resources to meet members' needs.

Relief committees were union branches' collective effort to survive during the dispute. The decisions of relief committees defined the aspects of survival which were a union concern, and by doing so also defined those that were families' responsibilities. The relief committee in Auckland took the work of shopping, and also the decision-making over what to buy, away from women, but left most other work involved in family

¹⁰⁵ Labrum, 'Family Needs and Family Desires', pp.191-207.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.114.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.244.

¹⁰⁸ See, Mark Peel, 'Charity, Casework and the Dramas of Class in Melbourne, 1920-1940: "Feeling Your Position"', *History Australia*, 2, 3, 2005.

¹⁰⁹ That enough material survived to write this chapter is almost entirely due to Bert Roth.

survival in their hands. This was a conscious decision; in living memory, some of the unions involved had collectivised much more of the work of survival. In Buller, in 1932, miners went on strike for 16 weeks, and the union organised soup kitchens providing two meals a day for adults and three for children.¹¹⁰ The relief committee made decisions about what aspects workers and their families' lives could change, even if they were not consciously addressed in those terms.

Families were central to the rhetoric of relief, and in most areas they were central to distribution decisions: those with more children received more relief. However, the way relief was organised also marginalised families. The relief committee provided aid to watersiders, and if a watersider did not seek relief it was assumed his family did not need it. Men mediated their families' relationships with the relief committee, as they had mediated their families' relationships to the workplace. Families may have come first in the rhetoric and distribution of relief, but maintaining a simulacrum of the breadwinner wage and masculine work spaces came first when relief committees were deciding how to organise relief.

¹¹⁰ Bruley, 'The Politics of Food'; Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community*, p.239. In other circumstances unions have set up campsites for striking workers and their families, Howard Zinn, Dana Frank, and Robin Kelley, *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century*, Boston, 2002.

Chapter 5: Union Work

All locked-out and striking workers had the pattern of their lives changed during the dispute. Instead of regular work days, men's rhythms of coming and going were driven by union activity. Union branches made decisions about how the dispute was run, and these in turn shaped the participation and experience of union members and their families. This chapter moves away from the material effects of the dispute to collective union activity and how that affected families' lives. It will start by examining various events of the dispute: meetings, work, rallies, socials and marches. Then it will explore how the dispute took place within homes, and the ways that the dispute brought men into homes on different terms from their usual routine. Finally, this chapter will look at children's experiences of the dispute both in their homes and outside them.



Figure 9: Watersiders outside Wellington Trades Hall after a union meeting, Easter 1951, PAColl 9508-3-78, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

The most important work of the dispute happened in union meetings. The largest

branches held daily union meetings.¹ Dick Scott called these meetings a strategic front,

¹ For example: NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meetings, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL; Scott, *151 Days*, pp.159-65.

and emphasised their importance for communication and morale.² It was an expensive front; the Auckland relief committee spent £140/12/10 in four weeks on fares.³ Ted Thompson remembers buying 50 six-trip train tickets from Lower Hutt to Wellington to ensure that the many Hutt watersiders could attend meetings.⁴ These meetings, the most basic daily activity of the dispute, were male-only and not open to family members. Figure 9 shows men coming out on the street after a union meeting at Easter – a sea of hats and coats.⁵ Attendance at the meetings was strictly policed. Len Gale, a strong supporter of the watersiders who ended up writing the Auckland branch's propaganda, could not attend because he was not an NZWWU member. He would wait outside to learn what had happened after the meeting.⁶ For watersiders, attendance at every daily meeting was mandatory; the Auckland branch followed-up those who did not attend.⁷

The work of the union, such as collecting money, distributing propaganda and organising relief, was organised from these meetings. In the larger branches, sub-committees took charge of different tasks. At a Trade Union History Project seminar discussing the lockout, speakers emphasised how many different jobs were involved in the dispute: "We had vegetable stalls and people manned them, and a lot of those people were not speakers in union meetings, they were people that were fairly quiet and just did their job, but they turned up every day at about 8 o'clock, sorted their stuff and dished it out there."⁸ For example, the same two men worked a Gestetner throughout the lockout; they treated it as a job.⁹ Where possible, union branches organised the work of the dispute in a way that provided continuity with waterfront work: as a full work day, by men, and organised in male-only spaces.

² *ibid.*

³ Auckland Watersiders Relief Committee, Cashbook, 1951, 94-106-11/05, Roth Papers, ATL. The Wellington relief committee also subsidised workers fares to attend meetings, although the detailed financial records have not survived, Ted Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 30 August, 18 October 1990, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

⁴ Ted Thompson interview with Cath Kelly, 30 August, 18 October 1990, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

⁵ PAColl-9508-3-78, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

⁶ Len Gale interview with Grace Millar, 19 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷ For example, NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meetings of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 29 March 1951, 14 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸ Trade Union History Project, 'A Dissenting New Zealand: a seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey', December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL.

⁹ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

Union branches did not take advantage of workers' free time to organise new activities or in new ways. The entire minutes of the Auckland branch survive, and occasional social soccer and rugby matches were the only organised activity that would not have been possible if watersiders were working during the day, rather than being locked out.¹⁰ Given the large role that branches played in organising members' sporting life, the only unusual aspect of these events was that they were organised as daytime events during the working week. Existing literature on free time and industrial disputes is limited, but emphasises transformation rather than continuity. Those remembering the British miners' lockout of 1926 talk about a carnival atmosphere, where people took on roles they would not normally take.¹¹ Aletha Melling has written an article on ladies' football matches in the 1921 British Miners' lockout, which both raised money and provided entertainment for men due to their transgressive nature.¹² There is no record of activity that transgressed gender norms during 1951, or any effort to create a carnival atmosphere where a different kind of life was possible.

In Auckland, Lyttelton, Wellington and some coal-mining areas, women formed women's auxiliaries, which provided a formal collective structure for women to participate in the dispute.¹³ Women's Auxiliary meetings played the same function for women who attended as union meetings played for men: they kept women informed about what was happening and were an opportunity to organise and participate in activities (see figure 10). Women's auxiliaries during the dispute have been discussed in some detail; Kathryn Parsons has written about the Auckland Women's Auxiliary and Melanie Nolan on both Auckland and Wellington.¹⁴ The evidence about them is so fragmentary that 387 words of notes that Mary Hepinstall took while talking to Joan Noon and Noeline Harvey are a major primary source.¹⁵ Historians often explore

¹⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meetings of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 18 April, 16 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹ Barron, *The 1926 Miners' Lockout*; Bruley, *The Women and Men of 1926*; Jaclyn Gier-Viskovatoff and Abigail Porter, 'Women of the British Coalfields on Strike in 1926 and 1984: Documenting Lives Using Oral History and Photography', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 19, 2, 1998.

¹² Alethea Melling, 'Plucky Lasses', 'Pea Soup' and Politics: The Role of Ladies' Football During the 1921 Miners' Lock-out in Wigan and Leigh', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 16, 1, 1999, p.48.

¹³ Parsons, 'The Women's Waterfront Auxiliary', p.55; Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community*, p.296.

¹⁴ Nolan, "'The Women Were Bloody Marvellous'"; Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams'; Parsons, 'The Women's Waterfront Auxiliary'.

¹⁵ Joan Noon interview with Mary Hepinstall, 30 April 1985, Notes, Noeline Harvey interview with Mary Hepinstall, 1985, Notes, Mary Hepinstall, notes, Bailey Papers, 2006-041-157, ATL.

women's auxiliaries in terms of women's political development.¹⁶ There is some evidence of this in 1951. Mary Hepinstall recorded that the Women's Auxiliary was Noeline Harvey's first political involvement that had a significant impact on her.¹⁷ However, it is impossible to generalise further on surviving evidence.

Previous work has established that women's auxiliaries saw their role as maintaining morale, and providing women a way of participating in collective activities of the dispute. At this it seems to have been successful, at least for the women who attended. Ida Thompson regularly attended the women's auxiliaries: "I used to pop down and it was really good to be with other women who were in the same predicament as what I was."¹⁸ The core purpose of women's auxiliaries was to build morale and commitment to the dispute among women. Union men did not see building the morale of women as their work, but the role of other women in gender-segregated spaces.



Figure 10: Women's Auxiliary Meeting ,Wellington, 1951, PAColl 9508-3-82, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

¹⁶ For example, Aulette and Mills, 'Something Old, Something New'; Margo Beasley, 'Soldiers of the Federation: The Women's Committees of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia', *Labour History*, 81, 2001; Lasky, "Where I Was a Person".

¹⁷ Noeline Harvey interview with Mary Hepinstall, 1985 Notes, Bailey Papers, 2006-041-157, ATL.

¹⁸ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

During the dispute, the women's auxiliaries organised collective work for women that paralleled the activities that branches organised. Chapter 3 discussed the way the Auckland Women's Auxiliary was excluded from the main relief organisation, but undertook some relief activity of its own. Members of the Auckland Women's Auxiliary travelled to Australia to speak to Australian watersiders and other supporters. The Women's Auxiliary's visit to Australia happened in parallel to visits by watersiders to Australia during the lockout. When asked if they took money back Lully said: "No we didn't – but I know money was given – not to us as the women – but it must have been given to the men."¹⁹ Women had formal roles within the dispute through the women's auxiliaries, but these were gender segregated.



Figure 11: March in Auckland, 1951, PAColl 9508-2-48, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

Both union branches and women's auxiliaries also organised collective events, such as marches, rallies and socials, during the dispute. These events were open to the general public, and were not controlled the way union meetings and union work were. The gender profile of these public events varied significantly, marches were the most male-dominated. There were a few marches during the dispute; the regulations gave police the power to stop marches, which they did not always use. Oral history accounts and

¹⁹ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

photographs show that almost all those who attended the marches were men, although there were a handful of women at each.²⁰ During the 1951 waterfront dispute, the Auckland watersiders' junior marching band led a march up Queen St (See Figure 11).²¹ This march was a masculine event, and the participation of boys underscored its gendered nature, just as the inclusion of watersiders' sons in images of the relief committee underscored the masculine nature of that space (see Figure 8). Unlike union meetings or union work, women were not explicitly excluded from these marches, but very few attended.

Rallies that were held in parks, as opposed to marches that took place on the street, had more women attendees.²² On 3 June 1951, the Auckland branch held a rally at the Auckland Domain. The rally was attended by 10,000 people (according to union figures), both men and women. In the photos of the event, some are concentrating on the speakers, others less so. One man and woman appear to be sharing an intimate moment, which is compatible with how the Domain had been used previously.²³ Women's auxiliaries also organised mixed-gender rallies. Early in the lockout, the Auckland Women's Auxiliary organised two rallies in Myers Park (as seen in figure 14).²⁴ The events organised by the Women's Auxiliary, still had male speakers and attendees, but they were also family events with a number of children in attendance.²⁵ The Christchurch branch organised a rally for Mother's Day on 13 May 1951, after a previous rally that was more explicitly political had been shut down by the police earlier in the month. Approximately 600 people attended.²⁶ Speakers emphasised the hardship that watersiders' wives and mothers faced and the meeting passed a motion to repeal the parts of the Emergency Regulations that applied to women and children.²⁷ A police officer present described the event: "although the theme was supposedly Mother's Day,

²⁰ PAColl-9508-2-24, 45, 53, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL; Lully Watene Heemi, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²¹ PAColl-9508-2-48, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

²² PAColl-4920-1-003, Photographs relating to Herbert Roth's research and publications; PAColl-9508 3-72, 2-70, 2-07-08, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

²³ Caroline Daley, 'A Gendered Domain: Leisure in Auckland, 1890-1940,' in *The Gendered Kivi*, Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie, eds, Auckland, 1999, p.91.

²⁴ PAColl-4920-1-003, Photographs relating to Herbert Roth's research and publications; NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meetings, 16 March, 16 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁵ PAColl-4920-1-003, Photographs relating to Herbert Roth's research and publications; PAColl-9508 2-07-08, 2-34-37, 2-26-9, 2-70, 3-72, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

²⁶ GA Brewer, Christchurch CIB Report, 13 May 1951, (R10074968), ADMO-W5595-21007-1-25/9/20/2 Part 1, ANZ-WO.

²⁷ *ibid.*

the main topic was (Class-hatred).’’²⁸ There were not many mixed-gender events during the dispute, but those that were organised were open to everyone, not just those involved in the dispute, and they were held in spaces – like parks – that were traditionally mixed gender spaces.

There were some collective social events organised by union branches during the dispute, but the evidence of them is very fragmented. Tom H. described dances and films in Auckland, which his wife did not go to, but which were open to women.²⁹ The Auckland minutes list a concert in April, which watersiders were encouraged to bring their families to, a film screening also in April, and a social in May.³⁰ There were possibly more social events than listed in the minutes; both the Women’s Auxiliary and a special entertainment sub-committee organised social events.³¹ No photographs from these events have survived, which makes it difficult to discuss their gender make-up. However, after the social organised by the Women’s Auxiliary in May, Johnny Mitchell spoke to the executive and chastised them for not attending: “the attendance at the combined women’s social last night was very poor. There were only 30 watersiders there altogether including one Executive member.”³²

Men participated in the dispute as a collective event in gender-segregated union meetings, and they also experienced the financial effects of the dispute at home. Their wives experienced the financial effects of the dispute at home, but far fewer women attended auxiliary meetings than men attended union meetings. There were probably around 100 women in the meeting in Figure 10, considerably less than ten per cent of the wives of locked-out workers, let alone striking workers.³³ The gender segregation of the dispute was asymmetrical; for men meetings were compulsory, for women they were a minority experience.

²⁸ Brackets in original, *ibid*.

²⁹ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

³⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meetings, 16 April 1951, 23 April 1951, 26 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³¹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 25 May 1951; NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 21 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³² NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 26 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³³ There were 2,000 watersiders in Wellington, Strike Returns, 19 April 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

At the same time gender-segregation was not total. For example, in both Auckland and Wellington a few women attended each of the major marches.³⁴ The leadership of the Wellington Women's Auxiliary did not approve of women participating in marches; their motives seem to have been a mix of upholding gender roles and anti-communism (as communist women involved were most likely to transgress gender norms).³⁵ A handful of Wellington women, including the communist women that caused anxiety among some other Women's Auxiliary members, were also involved in distributing illegal bulletins.³⁶ Lully Watene's father, Steve Watene, was head of the Māori committee: "Being the eldest, I was allowed to go with him – I think I was allowed to go with him – because my mother would say go with your father to look after him. That's why I went with my father all the time".³⁷ Under the guise of looking after her father, Lully Watene attended many events that were otherwise only open to men.

Women's participation in collective activity varied significantly, and one of the important factors was the attitude of their husbands. Men were given the information about Women's Auxiliary meetings, social events and rallies at union meetings, which put them in the position of gatekeeper. Some men policed their wives' attendance at collective events. Bill Andersen told his wife Flora that she could not go on the marches because she was pregnant.³⁸ Betty Allen's husband discouraged her from attending events during the dispute: "Jack used to say that it's all men's business".³⁹ Ida Thompson, who was very involved in Women's Auxiliary activities, described how her husband Ted facilitated this: "The meetings were held at half past seven or something like that – and Ted was home then to look after the kids – put them to bed".⁴⁰ Women often needed their husband's co-operation to attend Women's Auxiliary events. Likewise women who were most active, such as Rona Bailey, Lully Watene Heemi, and Fuzz Barnes, had their husbands' support and co-operation (or in Lully Watene Heemi's

³⁴ PAColl-9508-2-24, 45, 53, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL; Lully Watene Heemi, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³⁵ Joan Noon interview with Mary Hepinstall, 30 April 1985, Notes, Bailey Papers, 2006-041-157, ATL.

³⁶ Joan Noon interview with Mary Hepinstall, 30 April 1985, Notes, Bailey Papers, 2006-041-157, ATL. Rona Bailey interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union History 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

³⁷ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³⁸ Flora Andersen interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012; Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³⁹ Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams', p.70.

⁴⁰ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

case her father).⁴¹ Men could have a substantial impact on their female relatives' participation in the collective events of 1951.

Informal collective activity about the dispute is harder to trace than union activity, but it did exist and was not as rigidly gender segregated. Informal meetings happened within family homes. Some children, like Frankie Manson, Beverley Arnell and David Dick, describe their houses as being full of people and discussions about the dispute.⁴²

Fragmentary evidence has also survived that indicates that women built their own support networks, separate from the union auxiliary or union branches. Maureen Martin described talking about the dispute with other women in Plunket, and the conversation two Nelson women had about the dispute has been recorded in extraordinary detail.⁴³

Len Gale's oral history included stories of informal activities that were more gender integrated. In 1951, Len Gale and his wife Grace were living with his mother, brother and sister. He tells of a whole family involved in the dispute in ways mostly separated from the branch organisation:

So the university students got this idea of making mardi-gras heads and they were going to walk up and down Queen St and one would be Uncle Sam and one would be Sid Holland and I forget who else – there were four or five of these heads. So of course, being university students they were keen as mustard about this. Jim's [Gale's brother] colleagues in the socialist club – keen? Oh they were rapt – how do you make them? So it fell upon us – the women and myself – and a couple of others.⁴⁴

By 'the women', Gale meant his wife, mother, sister, and next-door neighbour Topsy. Topsy's father was a watersider, and she worked at a toilet paper factory. They used toilet paper she brought home from the factory to make these mardi gras heads. The heads did not last long, but everyone involved seems to have enjoyed themselves:

⁴¹ Rona Bailey interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union History 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL; Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Fyfe, 'Fuzz Barnes'.

⁴² Frankie Manson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL; Beverley Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010; David Dick interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁴³ Nelson Districts Special Branch file about the dispute: (R10074972), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/50/5, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO; Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

⁴⁴ Len Gale interview with Grace Millar, 19 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

So I got onto Ronnie Black, of the seamen, and they got a truck – a flat-top truck and they drove up and down Queen St, but unfortunately one or two of them had had a few too many drinks and they got pretty active with these sticks and banners that they had – and it wasn't long before these heads fell apart.⁴⁵

Topsy, who might have struggled to find a way to participate in the dispute herself despite her father's position, was involved in this action because of her relationship with Gale's family.

Gale's story revealed an important aspect of collective events of the dispute; they could be fun. Lully Watene went with her father to look after him, but that's not all she did: "But he let me have a good time – I could go to dances and that – meetings and that – that's how I got out with him all the time. I think I was his caregiver – supposed to be looking after him – but I was having a good time".⁴⁶ Lully Watene's narrative about travelling to Australia also showed how much fun it was. She talked about wanting to go home because she was homesick. But she also described meeting up with young Māori military men who were in Australia on their way to Korea. In Auckland, she went to dances three evenings a week, and so knew these men from the dance halls. She was aware of the contradictions: "I had a lot to do with the army people – that were over there – people who were going to Korea – who actually left New Zealand ahead of us – and they were stationed there. So I met them – see they were different – we were [staying] with the communist party, I know that".⁴⁷ Even in Australia, her work on the Women's Auxiliary was connected to the fun she had in her life at other times, and the relationships she had formed at dances in the Maori community centre.

The dispute took place within workers' homes; it brought men into some homes, at times and for purposes far beyond what was usual. The way union branches organised during the dispute was strongly affected by the Emergency Regulations that criminalised many activities that would normally be part of any union's work during an industrial dispute. Regulation 4(d) criminalised the printing and distribution of union propaganda during the dispute, Regulation 14 outlawed picketing, and Regulation 16 gave the police

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

powers to limit public processions and meetings.⁴⁸ These regulations meant much of the work of the dispute was pushed into the homes of watersiders and their supporters.

The production and distribution of propaganda required space, and most stages, from creation to distribution, took place in family homes. Chip Bailey typed illegal leaflets in his home.⁴⁹ Ted and Ida Thompson lived up a long flight of stairs in Highbury, which was then on the outskirts of Wellington. The isolation and difficult access made their home an excellent venue to print leaflets and their house was home to a Gestetner for the duration of the dispute.⁵⁰ Once they were printed, leaflets were often stored in people's homes. During the lockout, Jenny Cameron found stacks of leaflets hidden in her home.⁵¹ The de-registration of the NZWWU, and the illegality of the remaining union funds, meant that union money could not be kept in a bank, so homes also had to operate as banks. Frankie Manson's father, Jack Manson, looked after the money that the branch had collected. She remembered what she had been told: "The things that I remember most were that Dad had most of the money, he looked after all the money – it was thousands of pounds apparently".⁵²

Some union activities that took place in family homes involved a substantial disruption to the usual family routines. The Watene family's state house was the relief depot in Panmure. Lully Watene Heemi described how their house was used as a food storage depot: "You had - it had to be collected by nine in the morning and it closed at three, because we didn't want any – we had nowhere to store – so you had to collect it".⁵³ In Auckland, an average of 50 people visited each sub-depot for relief.⁵⁴ To have 50 people visit several times a week to collect food was a significant disruption to normal household routines. Ida Thompson talked in some detail about how running a Gestetner affected her home. "The kids enjoyed watching them. Of course I was busy

⁴⁸ 'The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951', *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, pp.67, 71-2.

⁴⁹ Ted Thompson and Ida Thompson interviews with Cath Kelly, 30 August, 18 October 1990, OhInt-0112/3; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁵² Frankie Manson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵³ Lully Watene Heemi interview with Grace Millar, 18 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁵⁴ 'Report', Relief Committee, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union (Auckland Branch), 1951, 94-106-11/06, Herbert Roth Papers.

making cups of tea and that for the workers”.⁵⁵ The Gestetner was kept in the living room and came with two men whose job was to run it.⁵⁶ Ida Thompson made it clear that even though the living room had a Gestetner and two men in it, it was still her living room and she worked to look after her visitors.⁵⁷ She also emphasised how much the men who ran the printing press got on with the children, and that she liked having this printing production in her home. Her home could be both her home and a workplace at the same time; she did not see the two activities as incompatible.

Police officers also came into workers’ homes because of the dispute. Regulation 18 gave police officers (above the rank of sergeant) the power to enter a home without a warrant, to investigate and enforce the regulations.⁵⁸ The NZWWU criticised the government’s action, emphasising that the privacy of workers’ homes should be respected. The ‘Wellington Watersiders Information Bulletin’ discussed Regulation 18 under the heading ‘our homes next’, and after quoting the regulation asked: ‘Do you hear the tramp of Holland’s jack-booted storm-troopers invading the privacy of your home, in the dead of night?’⁵⁹ Max Bollinger drew cartoons that condemned this regulation, for example Figure 12, which shows a watersider’s wife, her privacy invaded, as a victim of Regulation 18 and a strange man’s gaze. In her bath, she has nothing that relates to the dispute, and cannot hide anything.⁶⁰ Max Bollinger had his own house raided during the dispute. In 1993, he described his wife Kay’s reaction:

One of my clearest memories from that dispute is Kay with her arms folded standing in front of the boys’ bedroom door and saying ‘You bastards aren’t coming in here and waking my kids’ and they all looked at each other they looked at their revolvers they consulted Dave [the sergeant] and Dave said “oh no we’ll go out the kitchen” and they went out and examined the pots and pans instead. They never did get into the bedroom. There probably were some leaflets under the bed, I don’t know.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Ted Thompson and Ida Thompson interviews with Cath Kelly, 30 August, 18 October 1990, OhInt-0112/3, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁶ Ted Thompson and Ida Thompson interviews with Cath Kelly, 30 August, 18 October 1990, OhInt-0112/3; Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁷ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁵⁸ ‘The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951’, *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.73.

⁵⁹ ‘Wellington Watersiders Information Bulletin’, 16 April 1951, Number 14, Roth Papers, 94-106-10/06, ATL.

⁶⁰ It also gave Bollinger an opportunity to draw and distribute a picture of a naked woman.

⁶¹ Trade Union History Project, ‘A Dissenting New Zealand: a seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey’, December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL. The revolver may be a dramatization, although David Patterson was a detective and so would have been entitled to carry a revolver, Graeme Dunstall, *A Policeman’s Paradise? Policing a Stable Society, 1918-1945*, Palmerston North, 1999, p.159.

The difference between the actions of the generic woman that Bollinger drew and those of his wife are striking. Rather than being passive, outraged and vulnerable, Kay stands as more powerful than the police officers and their guns, using her power in the



Figure 12: 'Wellington Watersiders Information Bulletin', 16 April 1951, Number 14, Roth Papers, 94-106-10/06, ATL.

domestic realm as a partisan. She is shown as successfully protecting her children and their right to privacy and sleep, and also using her position as mother to ensure the police did not find incriminating evidence.

In oral histories, narratives of fierce women protecting their homes are relatively common. Rona Bailey told a very similar story to Bollinger's when she described her own home being raided.⁶² Frankie Manson described her grandmother's role when her grandparents' home was raided: "It quite often got raided of course,

and Dad would be going out with the money, while grandma kept the police busy at the front."⁶³ Len Gale made a series of leaflets using lino cuts and distributed these illegal pamphlets. The police were aware he was making and distributing them, and came to the house where he was living with his parents:

The police always came in the evening about 7 o'clock. And on one occasion – and you've got to understand that Mum – ever the hostess –

⁶² Bailey, 'Telling the World 'the Other Side of the Story', pp.43-4.

⁶³ Frankie Manson, interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

would make them a cup of tea – it’s almost like Charlie Chaplin. Anyway, one day there was a stack of lino cuts on the table and Mum, pretending to be embarrassed at wearing an apron that was a bit grubby probably, took it off and put it over the lino-cuts. So the policeman put his cup and saucer beside it.⁶⁴

Len portrays his mother, just as Bollinger portrays Kay and Rona Bailey portrays herself, as using domesticity to distract the police and assert some control.

Seamen boarded with watersides’ families during the dispute, another way that men came into working-class homes during the dispute. A seaman normally lived and worked on a ship and there were many stranded seamen who had nowhere to stay while they were on strike. Very early in the dispute billets for seamen were requested in waterside workers’ meetings.⁶⁵ This could be a mutually beneficial arrangement, because the Seamen’s Union, unlike the watersiders, provided relief in cash.⁶⁶ Max Bollinger’s family had a seaman who boarded with them, and he gave his strike pay to Kay Bollinger.⁶⁷ Keith Roberts, another seaman, lived with his parents in Wellington while he was on strike.⁶⁸ Jimmy Gibson’s parents also lived in Wellington, but he went on strike in Dunedin, and so he had to board with the family of friends. During the dispute 2,000 seamen were on strike and needed accommodation, and most stayed in working-class homes as boarders. In 1951, boarding was a reasonably common practice, but it was also directly in conflict with the post-war ideal of a nuclear family having space to itself.⁶⁹

The effect on the family of having men in the house, either as boarders or as workers, depended on the men involved. Ida Thompson was full of praise for the two men who ran the Gestetner in her house and appreciated the company: “I quite enjoyed it really, having the kids and the two men there, and making cups of tea and that and you sort of forgot about all other things that were going on”.⁷⁰ On the other hand, some seamen

⁶⁴ Len Gale interview with Grace Millar, 19 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁵ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 30 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁶ Trade Union History Project, ‘A Dissenting New Zealand: a seminar on the Life of Rona Bailey’, December 1993, audio recording, OHC-01451, OHC-ATL.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Keith Roberts interview with Grace Millar, 19 June 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁹ Schrader, ‘Labour at Home’.

⁷⁰ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

boarders caused trouble when they did not respect the standards of behaviour expected in a family home. The Auckland strike committee of the Seamen's Union took action against two of its members: "This committee recommends that at the conclusion of this dispute, the local Executive interview two of our members, who in our opinion have behaved very poorly while staying at a watersiders home: C. J TAYLOR. 16358 & T. BASSETT. 16466. These members, both SEAMENS BOYS, were requested to leave watersiders home after having been intoxicated a number of times."⁷¹ While union activities could be disruptive, women seem to have been able to maintain their domestic life.

Only a small proportion of the homes of watersiders and their supporters were used for union work, or raided, but far more were affected by the increased presence of men who had previously spent up to 59 hours a week in paid work. During the lockout, the *Otago Daily Times* published an interview with a woman whose husband was a tramwayman, and had recently been on strike: "I remember the transport strike...It was no good to me when my husband had to cut down on the housekeeping money. It's hard enough managing even at the best of times. It is even worse when you have a man under your feet all day in the house."⁷² As we saw in Chapter 1, waterfront work shaped watersiders' homes. During the lockout men could spend far more time with their families and in their homes.

The daily union meetings in the larger branches meant that union members were not home all day. Russell French discussed the importance of the meetings: "We went to a meeting every morning [...] and that kind of filled your morning up, the time the meeting was on, and then there was odd things to do in the afternoon."⁷³ By holding union meetings in the morning, branches were ensuring that watersiders had to leave their home as they would if they were working. Robert Hannah, whose father was a Dunedin watersider, said: "I was very protected when I think back on those days, very protected, because Dad got on his bike for 151 days and went to work".⁷⁴ The daily

⁷¹ Auckland Branch Seamen's Union Strike Committee Minutes, 29 May 1951, 80-307-15/11, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, ATL.

⁷² *Otago Daily Times*, 20 April 1951, p. 6; as cited in Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.73.

⁷³ Russell French interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁴ Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

meetings served many purposes, but one of them was to create continuity among unionists and their families, and ensure that during the lockout men started their days in the same way that they would have normally.

Some watersiders worked just as hard on union business, such as relief, as they had on the wharves. Others involved in the dispute were working even longer hours and travelling out of town, such as George Pitman and Steve Watene from the Māori committee, or Con Doyle who lived in Wairoa and was deeply involved in the dispute in Wellington.⁷⁵ However, those who were busy during the dispute left more of a record than those who were not. There is very little evidence, even in oral histories, of the impact of watersiders' increased free time on them and their families.

Some men have discussed the boredom they felt, having so much more free time. Boredom was a private activity, for those who did not find a role within the collective work of the dispute. Russell French said: "Then gradually of course it got more boring as time went on."⁷⁶ Keith Roberts, a 22 year-old seaman, who lived with his parents while he was on strike, emphasised his boredom in his oral history: "Entertainment was the biggest problem and filling in the days. You sort of had nothing to look forward to. At least if you're in jail say, you got six months to go, you know in six months' time you'll be out, don't you? This was – we thought it would never end."⁷⁷ Oral histories that openly talk about boredom show that not doing paid work left a hole in many men's lives.

Some men undertook unpaid work around their own or others' houses during the dispute. Keith Roberts painted his friend's step-father's house for beer, cigarettes and something to do.⁷⁸ He was not the only person involved in the dispute to do substantial home maintenance for friends and acquaintances. Mr Benow, an Auckland watersider, painted his brother's house and Mr Franklyn, another Auckland watersider, volunteered his labour and his friend's equipment, to fix the houses of any watersiders who required

⁷⁵ Steve Watene, 'Reporting on the trip by Auckland Maori workers to rural Maori areas telling people not to scab' [1951], 94-106-09/06, Roth Papers, ATL; Conan Doyle interview with Hugo Manson, 1986, OH-Coll-011881, OHC-ATL.

⁷⁶ Russell French interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁷ Keith Roberts interview with Grace Millar, 19 June 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

it.⁷⁹ In these cases men were doing unpaid labour in other people's homes, possibly to give them something to do away from their own. Hotere pointed out that many watersiders could not afford to do maintenance that required resources but work like collecting firewood and gardening was even more important during the dispute.⁸⁰ Some men undertook unpaid work that their wives had done, such as cooking and childcare, because their wives were at work. Unpaid labour could serve different purposes: it gave men something to do, it saved money and it saved time for women who had taken up paid work.

Neither discussions of men's boredom nor accounts of their unpaid labour go anywhere near discussing the effect on family members of having men at home under completely different terms from usual. When Russell French was asked what effect his additional free time had on his family, he deflected the question: "The next one was born in '51 - December '51 – that was a result of having nothing to do during the lockout, see".⁸¹ Children have spoken about their parents' stress and conflict, although after sixty years it is impossible to tease out the consequences of the husband's presence from all the other stresses of the dispute.⁸² Surviving evidence provides glimpses of how some family members and relationships were affected by having the men at home, but these are only suggestive. The question is too intimate, and would have varied too much, to be answered in a more systematic way from this distance.

So far this chapter has concentrated on women and men and how they participated in and experienced the dispute. Looking at children's experiences, through photographs and oral history, provides another perspective. Children's participation in the collective events was even more removed than their mothers'. In the main centres, women's auxiliaries organised social events for children (see Figure 13), but these did not feature strongly in the interviews of those who were children at the time of the dispute. Beverly Arnell, who was six years old at the time of the dispute, talked in an oral history interview about the Wellington children's party, remembering that it was held in Trades

⁷⁹ Union minutes only provide last names of members. NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meetings of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 29 March 1951, 14 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸⁰ Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.91.

⁸¹ Russell French interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸² Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011; Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

Hall. However, her discussion focused on which firms had and had not provided food for the party, and her family's on-going boycott of the firm that refused to provide anything. Her childhood memories of the party were tied up with memories of family discussions about the party years later.⁸³ Other children interviewed did not remember events like this during the dispute, either because they did not attend, or because they had forgotten.



Figure 13: Children's party organised by the Wellington Women's Auxiliary, 1951, PAColl 9508-3-11, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

Children did attend some of the mixed-gender rallies. There are photos of children at rallies in Carlaw Park Auckland, in the Wellington Town Hall, and at Myers Park Auckland.⁸⁴ Figure 14 shows children playing on a rocking-boat, during the rally in Myers Park organised by the Auckland Women's Auxiliary.⁸⁵ A photo of a rally in

⁸³ Beverley Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁴ PAColl-9508-2-26, 27, 28, 29, 3-82 Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs; PAColl-4920-1-003, Photographs relating to Herbert Roth's research and publications, ATL.

⁸⁵ PAColl-4920-1-003, Photographs relating to Herbert Roth's research and publications, ATL.

Carlaw Park shows children playing on the bank in the scrub.⁸⁶ These photos show children, who were brought along to union events, creating their own activities. They may have been at a collective union event, but their experience was not the same as adults'. The purpose of the rally, and the nature of the speakers, was less important to these children's experiences of the rally, than who and what they could find to play with.



Figure 14: Women's Auxiliary Rally in Myers Park, 1951, PAColl-4920-1-003, Photographs relating to Herbert Roth's research and publications, ATL.

Most children's memories of the dispute related to family experiences; in oral history interviews, narrators emphasised the ignorance and confusion they felt as children. Children who grew up to be waterside workers themselves and had significant knowledge about the dispute could still remember and narrate the confusion that they had felt as children.⁸⁷ In some oral history narratives, people who were children at the time of the dispute frame their lack of knowledge as their parents protecting them. Robert Hannah said: "I didn't really know what was happening till much later".⁸⁸ Beverly Arnell also emphasised that her parents were protecting her by not telling her

⁸⁶ PAColl-9508-2-26, 27, 28, 29, Photographs relating to waterfront dispute, Dick Scott Photographs, ATL.

⁸⁷ Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011; David Dick interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011; William Dougherty interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011; Kevin Ford, interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁸ Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

what was happening. Not all children presented their ignorance as benign, Kevin Ford said:

I can't remember a heck of a lot of the strike itself, but we weren't allowed, I know, to play with children across the road from us. They weren't allowed in our yard, and we weren't allowed to go to theirs, because they – their father was a scab – I only found out later on in life. I couldn't understand why – because everytime I went over there I got a hiding, so that was it, I didn't go.⁸⁹

Lack of knowledge also felt frightening for some children; when Frankie Manson was asked if she had anything else to say at the end of an oral history interview she replied: “Not really – except that how scary it was sometimes as a small child, because you never knew what was going to happen next.”⁹⁰ Children who centred their narratives about the dispute in the home, focused on their own ignorance and confusion.

When children tell stories of the dispute in which their parents were not present, they present themselves as partisans. Beverly Arnell described herself decades later, as taking an active part in the dispute:

We lived down an alleyway and I was playing in the back-yard. There was two men – I remember them – and they rushed down there – because it was a dead-end – and they threw the pamphlets over the fence and I hid them in a bucket – I don't know why. And they called the police the ‘Ds’ – ‘the Demons’- and mother said ‘the demons knocked on the door and wanted to know where the papers were, but she didn't know anything about them.’ She said they never searched the place – they just accepted her word. And then I brought out the papers later on.⁹¹

Gwendolene Pawson, who was 13 years old at the time of the dispute, also narrated a story of herself as a partisan; she described in some detail her role in a physical fight between children of watersiders and children of strikebreakers.⁹² The common thread between these two narratives is that both Pawson and Arnell were in a children's world,

⁸⁹ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹⁰ Frankie Manson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC- ATL.

⁹¹ Beverley Arnell interview with Grace Millar, 12 May 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹² Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

without any adults around, when they took actions that they later understood as being part of the dispute.

Some children remembered themselves not as partisans, but as victims. At least two Wellington primary schools, Thorndon and Clifton Terrace, segregated watersiders' children from other children at lunch during the dispute. Two children, at two different schools, remembered this practice of segregation; their memories were the only evidence that it existed.⁹³ The children who remembered this practice understood that it was to ensure that the other children did not break the Emergency Regulations by giving some of their lunch to watersiders' children. It had a much more substantial effect on the children involved. Graham McCready was six and a half when he was segregated at Thorndon school: "So what that did was to stigmatise the watersiders' kids and that we were outlaws basically. That had a very adverse effect going on."⁹⁴ The experience of being separated and ostracised remained with McCready for life, and reduced him to tears decades later.⁹⁵

In photographs and in children's oral histories there is a noticeable gap between children's experiences and adults' experiences. There is no mention of children being segregated at lunch in either watersiders' propaganda. The most likely explanation for this silence is that parents did not know about this aspect of their children's experiences. Graham McCready never told his parents about being segregated at school. When asked specifically if they were aware, he answered: "To get into a conversation at the tea table was to risk getting slapped around the side of your head with a breadknife".⁹⁶ Adults did not necessarily realise how children understood the dispute.

⁹³ I have not been able to find material about this in any school records, or material from the Ministry of Education about how to deal with the dispute. However, two different children, one who was segregated and one who witnessed segregation remembered this happening at two separate, but nearby schools. Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Mark Derby. 'Strikes and labour disputes - The 1951 waterfront dispute', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, available at: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/strikes-and-labour-disputes/7> updated 13 May 2010. The account from Clifton Terrace was told to Mark Derby around the 50th anniversary of the dispute by a child, whose father was not a watersider, but remembered what happened to other children, and wished to remain anonymous, Mark Derby to Grace Millar, e-mail, 27 March 2010.

⁹⁴ Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

While union members were locked out and on strike, work continued, although it was a very different kind of work, based on daily meetings aimed at maintaining solidarity.

Other collective activity, such as distributing relief and producing illegal union publications was organised from these meetings, as were collective events, rallies, marches and socials. These meetings were gender segregated, with women's auxiliaries forming an asymmetrical mirror to union branch activities that were organised by and for men. The branch meetings, which were male only, shaped men's experience of the dispute – and ensured they experienced the dispute with men in a similar position. Women had a much more varied experience of the dispute; some women had little contact with union activities, others were involved in the Women's Auxiliary, and a very small number were involved with both the Women's Auxiliary and also male union activities.

Gender segregation did not just happen, male unionists created it, and it was maintained by some men and women, and ignored by others. Women were more likely to experience the dispute as domestic stress than through collective activity, because of decisions their husbands made, both as individuals and through union branches. Men's experiences of the dispute were intertwined with their wives' as they relied on their wives' work. The formal organisation of the dispute was gender segregated, but to replicate that by writing a gender-segregated history obscures the ways that women's and men's experiences were connected.

Finally, this chapter shows that the actions of the NZWWU maintained continuity in watersiders' lives. Jock Phillips, when making a similar point, argued that both watersiders and their opponents appealed to the same masculine values: "wharfies liked to present themselves as beer-drinking veterans, loyal to their mates, defenders of Mum and the kids. Once again this was a value system that Holland and his mates would have shared."⁹⁷ Phillips's argument minimises the difference between watersiders and both the government and ship-owners, and over relies on the use of similar language. However, he is right in arguing: "the lockout of 1951 did not leave behind a vision of a socialist dawn."⁹⁸ Contrary to the anti-communist propaganda of the government, watersiders as a whole did not act as if they wanted to build a new world from the ashes

⁹⁷ Jock Phillips, 'The '51 Lockout: The Last Hurrah,' in *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, David Grant, ed., Christchurch, 2004, p.174.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.176.

of the old. Instead they sought higher wages and shorter hours of work that would give them resources to develop what they already valued about their lives. Key decisions that union branches made, such as how they organised union work, the emphasis on ensuring men attended a union meeting each day, and how relief was provided, were made to ensure continuity with the lives watersiders had lived before.

Chapter 6: 'As A Scab': The End of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout

On 9 July 1951, the unions involved in the waterfront lockout and supporting strikes met and passed a return to work motion: "Supremely confident of the conscious discipline of our ranks we call upon every individual member to return to work and hold up the banner of his union on the job."¹ The wording of the motion implied a top-down decision, and suggested that the rank and file were waiting for the call to return to work; the end of the dispute was more complex than that. Workers made decisions, both formally and informally, about whether to continue, and those decisions shaped the end of the dispute. This chapter will begin by discussing the meanings that workers gave to the options they faced: to remain loyal, to work as a strikebreaker, or to take work in another industry. Then it will look at the last months of the lockout and supporting strikes to explore what decisions workers made and under what circumstances. Third and finally, it will explore the role of families in workers' decisions to continue or withdraw from the dispute.

The end of the 1951 waterfront lockout and supporting strikes has received less attention than its origins.² When historians have discussed how the dispute ended, they have tended to focus on the role of those in leadership positions. Michael Bassett frames the end in those terms, arguing that Barnes: "had held his men together with some skill during the first fourteen weeks of the dispute, but by June splits were beginning to show."³ Anna Green's discussion of the end of the dispute, unlike her book as a whole, places agency firmly with elected officials; she quotes an Auckland watersider who said: "some of us made an attempt to pull back on this thing, but there were individuals in the leadership that were able to convince the workers that they were winning when they were losing."⁴ This chapter will explore the end of the dispute in detail.

¹ Dick Scott, *151 Days: History of the Great Waterfront Lockout and Supporting Strikes, February 15-July 15, 1951*, 50th Anniversary Facsimile Edition, Auckland, 2001, p.197.

² For examples of studies which focus on the period before 1951 see: Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*; Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers'; Townsend, 'From Bureau to Lockout'. Bassett, *Confrontation '51*, pp.196–212; Meade, 'New Zealand Waterfront Unions, 1951-1967'.

³ Bassett, *Confrontation '51*, p.187.

⁴ Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour*, p.146.

As the months passed, workers and their families faced significant and increasing hardship. The lockout and supporting strikes only continued because individual members did not return to work as strikebreakers in the face of this hardship. Workers had to respect collective decisions for there to be a lockout of any duration at all. The most effective tool unionists had against workers making individual decisions to withdraw from the dispute was the meaning that they gave to those decisions. Throughout the dispute, union material maintained a strong dichotomy between loyal workers and ‘scabs’. Workers who remained committed to the dispute received a ‘loyalty card’ (see Figure 15). The cards, designed by Dick Scott and Max Bollinger, provided men who had remained out tangible evidence of their loyalty.⁵

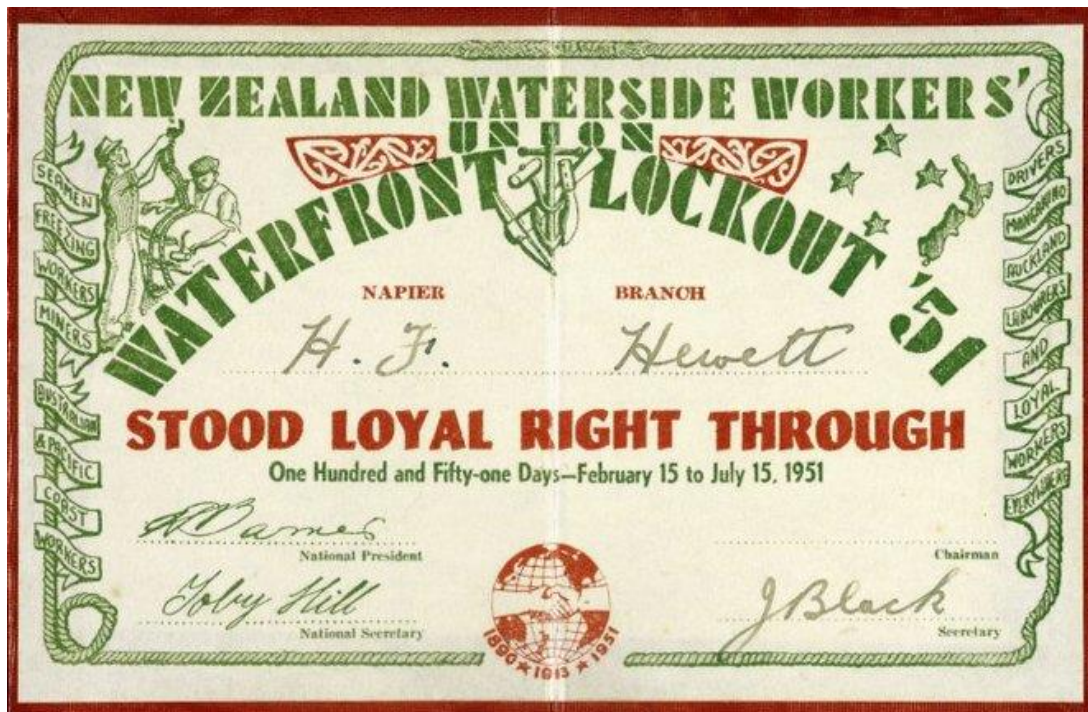


Figure 15: H. J. Hewett, Loyalty Card, Eph-A-LABOUR-1951-01, ATL.

Condemning strikebreakers as ‘scabs’ was the other side of valuing loyal workers. This chapter will use the term strikebreaker to refer to any civilian who worked as a watersider at any port before 15 July 1951. Describing workers as strikebreakers is a reference to the function they were playing; men chose to work as strikebreakers in a wide variety of circumstances. Union members used existing working-class understanding about ‘scabs’ to ensure that working as a strikebreaker was an act with so much meaning that it permanently defined those who undertook it. As Joseph Kereroa,

⁵ Scott, *Radical Writer's Life*, p.163.

a Huntly miner said: “If you’re a scab – you stay as a scab. I think they find out somehow or another you’re a scab. [...] Once you’re a scab you’re a scab – that’s it”.⁶ During the dispute, union branches created material that reinforced these ideas. They printed large numbers of newsprint leaflets with the poem ‘The Scab’:

After God had made the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, he had
some awful substance left with which he made a “Scab.”

A scab is a two-legged animal with a cork-screw soul, a water-sogged brain
and a combination backbone made of jelly and glue. [...]

No man has a right to scab so long as there is a pool of water to drown his
carcass in, or a rope long enough to hang his body with.⁷

The language and imagery watersiders used when talking about ‘scabs’ in 1951 was not unique to that time and place.⁸ ‘I’m too old to rat’, another poem, was printed on the other side of ‘The Scab’ leaflet. The image of the rat as a derogatory symbol for strikebreakers has a long history.⁹ The history and repetition of imagery and language had established the meaning that workers gave to ‘scabs’ long before the dispute began.

Unionists attacked the masculinity of ‘scabs’.¹⁰ In ‘The Freezing Workers Bulletin’, Max Bollinger explicitly depicted strikebreakers as rats rather than men (Figure 16). When constructing ‘scab lists’, union branches made careful note of those who were failing to meet other standards of working-class masculinity, such as being behind on maintenance payments for families they had separated from.¹¹ Towards the end of the dispute, the Wellington branch of the NZWWU wrote a pamphlet, in the same style as its regular union bulletins, about Arthur Bell, the leader of the new union in Wellington.

⁶ Joseph Kereopa interview with Jamie Mackay, 27 February 1992, OHInt-0020/07, OHC-ATL.

⁷ ‘The Scab’ MS Papers-8572-38, Scott Papers, ATL. Copies of the same leaflet are also held in: D-43, Crowther, G. S., NZ Waterside Workers’ Union, AUL.

⁸ For example, ‘The Scab’ was widely attributed to Jack London, the American author who died in 1916. In 1974, a union’s use of the same poem during the industrial dispute was the key part of a libel case that was decided within the U.S. Supreme Court, *LETTER CARRIERS v. AUSTIN*, U.S. Supreme Court, 418 U.S. 264, 1974.

⁹ Jacqueline Dickenson, ‘Chasing the Rat: The Language of Betrayal in Britain and Australia’, *Labour History Review*, 68, 2, 2003.

¹⁰ Historians have written about unionists’ construction of strikebreaking as the opposite of masculinity in a number of industrial disputes. Bergholm, ‘Masculinity, Violence and Disunity’; Faue, “‘The Dynamo of Change’”; Steven Maynard, ‘Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History’, *Labour/Le Travail*, 23, 1989; Rose, ‘Respectable Men, Disorderly Others’; Bruce Scates, ‘Mobilizing Manhood: Gender and the Great Strike in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand’, *Gender & History*, 9, 2, 1997.

¹¹ ‘Who’s Who on the Dunedin Wharves’ [1951], 94-106-11/07, Roth Papers, ATL.

Max Bollinger drew a cartoon that depicted Bell as a rat, and the text emphasized his failings as a man: “For assaulting his wife and then deserting her and the children he was set scot-free by the Court, and his family is given the deserted wives pension to this day”.¹² It also described him as drunk, violent and a thief.¹³

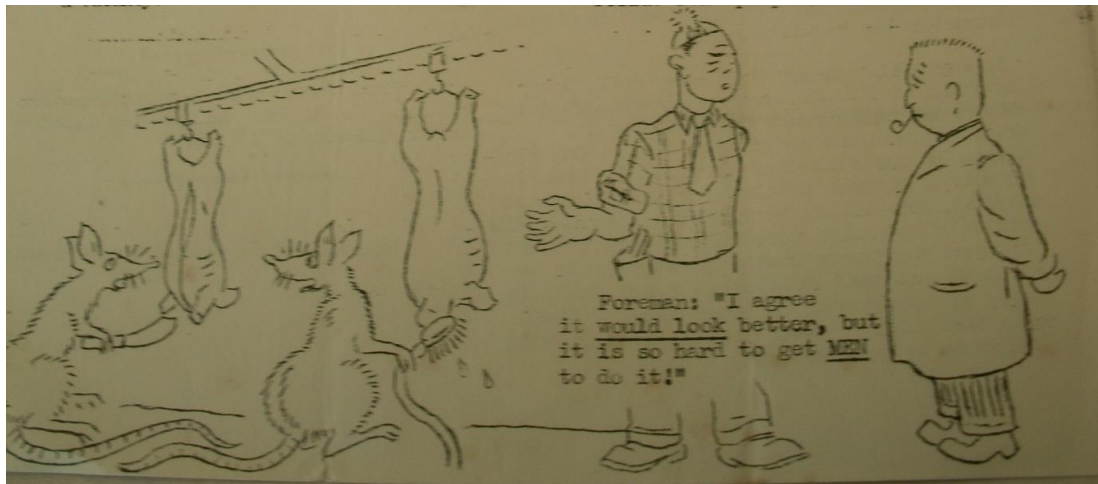


Figure 16: Max Bollinger Cartoon, ‘Freezing Workers Strike Bulletin’, [1951], 94-106-39/03, Roth Papers, ATL

Unionists needed to remember ‘scabs’ in order to ostracise them. Ron S. described how ‘scabs’ in the 1913 strike were treated in the late 1940s: “I was sitting on a box, and there was a joker there – an old joker – and I was talking to him – I didn’t know. And there was someone over there [...] he says, ‘Oh don’t talk to that joker he’s a 1913 scab’”.¹⁴ In Wellington, successive ‘scab lists’ were produced and each was carefully dated and labelled: “This list replaces all previous ones (9/7/’51)”.¹⁵ In Auckland, records were collected for years to try and establish a complete ‘scab list’.¹⁶ Union branches took a lot of care in their quest to accurately name ‘scabs’. These ‘scab lists’ were an act of remembering, a position that was often made explicit. The front of a Dunedin ‘scab list’ states: “This roll is inscribed to those despicable individuals who committed the vile crime of Scabbing during the great lockout. We will remember them.”¹⁷ For union members, the act of naming and remembering strikebreakers was a

¹² ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls’ [1951], Eph A Labour, ATL.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

¹⁵ ‘Scab’, 9 July 1951, 90-295, Goddard Papers, ATL.

¹⁶ Papers re strikebreakers, MS-Papers-8572-02, Scott Papers, ATL.

¹⁷ ‘Roll of Dishonour’, [1951], 94-106-11/07, Roth Papers, ATL. Another example of a leaflet that focuses its discussion of scabs around memory is ‘S-C-A-B spell SCAB’, [1951], 94-106-11/07, Roth Papers, ATL.

weapon. They treated the divide between a 'loyal worker' and a 'scab' as absolute and it defined those who fell on either side of it forever.¹⁸

During the 1951 waterfront dispute, most union branches condemned taking paid work in other industries almost as much as they did working on the wharf as a strikebreaker. In early April, the chair of the Auckland branch told a union member who travelled to Taupō to start a business: "he left the Union during a critical time and if every man did this there would be no union".¹⁹ Or, as a watersider's child understood it: "I got the impression that if you took other work, you were a scab".²⁰ Sam Holden, one of the few workers who did not return to work in Timaru, wrote to Jock Barnes in 1952, asking for a loyalty card. He noted the names of the other workers who had not worked as strikebreakers, but said that three of them had got other work, and therefore may not be eligible for a card.²¹ In this period, being locked out or on strike meant not doing paid work of any kind.²²

A union branch had the power to legitimise a workers' decision to take other work, by granting leaves of absence (temporary release) and clearances (permission to leave the union). Early in the dispute, union branches usually declined members' requests for clearances. In March, an Auckland watersider who requested a leave of absence to drive his friend's taxi while his friend went on holiday, and who undertook to donate all money he earned to the relief committee, was refused permission to do so.²³ Another watersider applied for clearance in March because a job he had wished to do for some time had become vacant, and was told to wait until after the dispute.²⁴ The Auckland branch only gave clearance in extraordinary circumstances in the first months of the

¹⁸ As Nick Dyrenfurth and Marian Quartly argued, in a slightly different context, working-class identity in New Zealand and Australia was actively created and that required creating its opposite. Nick Dyrenfurth and Marian Quartly, 'Fat Man v. 'The People': Labour Intellectuals and the Making of Oppositional Identities, 1890-1901', *Labour History*, 92, 2007.

¹⁹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 6 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁰ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²¹ Sam Holden to Jock Barnes, 14 February 1952, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

²² I have found no explicit historical discussion of changing attitudes towards other work during strikes and lockouts. Historians discussing disputes in other times and places make it clear that members did take other work: Kingsolver, *Holding the Line*; Jerrell Shofner, 'The Labor League of Jacksonville: A Negro Union and White Strikebreakers', *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 50, 3, 1972, p.280.

²³ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 29 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁴ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 16 March 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

dispute. For example, before the dispute began, Mr Wheeler's mother-in-law died and he and his family booked passages to Australia to take over the family business. At the beginning of May, the Auckland branch gave him permission to use this passage and leave the union.²⁵ Like so many other aspects of the dispute, decisions about whether members could take other work varied between branches. In Napier, watersiders regularly did harvest work for local farmers and the branch granted permission for watersiders to do so in the autumn of 1951, just as they would have if there had not been a lockout.²⁶

Union members on supporting strikes strongly disapproved of watersiders who took other work, since striking workers did not want to forgo their own wages to support workers who had an income. In June, unions on strike criticised the NZWWU because their Napier members were working.²⁷ Napier watersiders who got other jobs were also discussed critically by the Lyttelton branch of the Seamen's Union.²⁸ The depth of feeling on the issue of other work can be seen in the interviews of the Huntly Coalfields oral history project. In separate interviews, people from Huntly who were involved in the dispute stated that the Auckland watersiders had taken other jobs, while coalminers in Huntly were still on strike. For example, Bill Baker stated: "the miners were more unlucky than the wharfies – I would say – to be honest. We had no show of picking up a few bob on the side, but the wharfies up there they could go and get jobs, which a lot of them did – they were up working around under the table, getting payment".²⁹ Andrew McCallum and Jack Spence discussed wharfies doing other work as evidence that the miners should not have gone on strike: "51 we should never have been out. The wharfies had gone back to work and we were still out".³⁰ By the early 1990s, this narrative of what happened in Auckland had become a widely accepted truth within Huntly, as a grievance.

²⁵ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 1 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁶ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Barnes Papers, Box 1, Vault 156, AUL.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Minutes of a Special Branch Meeting of the Lyttelton Seamen's Union, 10 May 1951, Box 26, D8, Seamen's Union Auckland Branch Records, AUL.

²⁹ Bill Baker interview with Jamie Mackay, 10 March 1992, OHInt-0020/08, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHC-ATL.

³⁰ Andrew McCallum and Jack Spence interview with Jamie Mackay 24 February 1992, OHInt-0020/04, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHC-ATL.

The government and press also placed weight on locked-out watersiders' employment status. At the end of March, the police commissioner wrote to police districts asking how many waterside unionists had taken other jobs. Most of the reports he received indicated that just a handful of workers had taken other work; these reports were extremely detailed, often providing the names and addresses of the men involved.³¹ Detective Sergeant David Patterson, from Wellington, provided more vague estimates, when he wrote back on April 1:

I would believe that at the onset of the crisis a number between 10% and 15% would have taken further employment without delay. Since that time I believe that a further 25% or more would have taken other work. At a wide approximation perhaps half the Wellington waterside workers have taken other employment.³²

Patterson was not basing his figures on reliable information, unlike police officers in other towns. If half of the Wellington watersiders had found other work, then there would have been some record in other sources. Whether the police commissioner accepted Patterson's figures as true, or merely saw that they were useful, he passed them on to the press. On 5 April, *The Dominion* headline stated: "Many waterside strikers now in full-time jobs in various other industries".³³ The article claimed that the government had information that more than 1,000 watersiders had taken other jobs. A handful of workers from other ports, and half of Wellington's 2,200 workers became "more than 1,000".³⁴ The emphasis that the police and the government put on obtaining this information, and the willingness of the newspapers to use it, demonstrated the propaganda value of using other work to paint union members as insufficiently committed to the dispute.

Unionists worked hard to control the meaning of strikebreaking, but they did not control the circumstances under which members made decisions during the dispute. The Holland government's goal was to dismantle the NZWWU and get rid of the leaders Jock Barnes and Toby Hill, who they blamed for the union's militancy. From 27

³¹ Report of EG Ward, Lyttelton, 1 April 1951 and Report of Duncan Wilson, Oamaru, 31 March 1951, (R10074969), ADMO-21007-25/9/20/2, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

³² Report of Dave Patterson, Wellington, 1 April 1951, (R10074981) ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/12, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

³³ 'Many waterside strikers now in full-time jobs in various other industries', 5 April 1951, *The Dominion*, (R10074973), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/6, Part 1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

³⁴ *ibid.*

February 1951, the armed forces worked the waterfront, which alleviated the government's immediate problem of loading and unloading ships (although there were still delays) and bought them time.³⁵ In March, the government's emphasis was on persuading the NZWWU, or individual branches, to return to work on their terms.³⁶ Only the very smallest branches, such as Whakatane, which had 16 members, did so.³⁷ The government's effort to recruit strikebreakers began in earnest on April 7. The Department of Labour sent a letter to all watersiders, from William Sullivan, the Minister of Labour, asking them to register their interest if they were willing to work on the wharf.³⁸ On April 19, the first day the Department of Labour kept records, just 255 watersiders had registered to work as strikebreakers, out of a total workforce of 8,000.³⁹ After it was unsuccessful in recruiting union members to work as strikebreakers, the Department of Labour opened up registration to all. Strikebreakers from outside the industry were a significant threat to NZWWU members. Each port needed a certain number of workers, and every strikebreaker who was new to the industry took an existing worker's job.

Less evidence has survived about strikebreakers who took work in industries that were on supporting strikes, because the Department of Labour was not as involved. The Wellington District, Freezing & Related Trades Industrial Union of Workers was deregistered, and strikebreakers formed new unions in individual freezing works.⁴⁰ Meat processing was a seasonal industry, and the season at the freezing-works was winding down as the dispute started. Therefore, as the year advanced the question of a return to work at the freezing-works became less urgent. The leadership of both the United Mineworkers Union and the Seamen's Union actively opposed the strikes and so the government did not de-register either union.⁴¹ There appears to have been no effort to

³⁵ 'The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951', *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.69-70; Grant, ed., *The Big Blue*, p.183.

³⁶ Bassett, *Confrontation '51*, pp.119-20.

³⁷ Strike Return, 19 April 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO; *ibid.*, p.142.

³⁸ William Sullivan to 'sir', 7 April 1951, 94-106-11/06, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL.

³⁹ Strike Return, 19 April 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO. The Department of Labour recorded its work creating new unions meticulously, and therefore records have survived recording the number of strikebreakers at each port from mid-April till the end of the dispute in July.

⁴⁰ Department of Labour, Final Returns of Strike or Industrial Dispute', Freezing workers, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO; 'Scabs!' [1951], 94-106-39/03, Herbert Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴¹ Grant, *Jagged Seas*, pp.143-54; Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community*, pp.88-9, 297.

recruit strikebreakers to replace striking seamen; the ships did not sail.⁴² The mines were the most economically crucial of the striking industries, as coal was central to New Zealand's energy provision at the time.⁴³ Holland's government sent armed forces in to load coal that had been mined, and to work open-cast mines.⁴⁴ The Department of Labour did not try to create new unions for the mines, but they did try and persuade existing branches to return to work as strikebreakers, and some open-cast miners did return to work.⁴⁵

Initially, the Department of Labour had little success persuading watersiders to return to work, but in late April, workers at both the New Plymouth and Timaru branches voted to return to work. The Timaru branch had a history of conflict with the national union. At the 1949 NZWWU conference, the Timaru delegate, Mr Weith, was suspended and in the same motion the conference had sought an assurance from the Timaru Branch that "they will observe the Rules of the Union."⁴⁶ After his suspension Mr Weith had warned the conference that their decision "might isolate the Timaru Branch".⁴⁷ While the Conference proceedings do not detail what actions Timaru watersiders had taken to get this reaction, this existing conflict helps explain their decision to return to work. When the New Plymouth branch voted to return to work, Jock Barnes dismissed it as a bad port, but unlike Timaru there appears to be no evidence of conflict.⁴⁸ Norman Quinlan, a New Plymouth watersider, gave his explanation of New Plymouth workers' decision in the 2001 documentary *1951*.⁴⁹ Quinlan described the secretary of the New Plymouth union, Jack Harris, travelling down to Wellington to explain to the national office that the New Plymouth branch was desperate and needed financial assistance. Harris returned with a message that the national office could not provide any assistance. Quinlan linked the decision to return to work with the lack of aid. In *151 Days*, Dick

⁴² Bill Martin, 'Seamen and Scabs,' in *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, David Grant, ed., Christchurch, 2004, pp.86-7.

⁴³ The 1951 support strike has become widely accepted as the turning point in the decline of the importance of underground coal mining in New Zealand, Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community*, p.285.

⁴⁴ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL; Department of Labour, Final Returns of Strike or Industrial Dispute', Miners, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁵ 'Department of Labour Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute', 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁶ New Zealand Waterside Workers Union, Report of the Twenty-Seventh Conference, 6-15 December 1949, 84-058-1/16, Hill Papers, ATL.

⁴⁷ New Zealand Waterside Workers Union, Report of the Twenty-Seventh Conference, 6-15 December 1949, 84-058-1/16, Hill Papers, ATL.

⁴⁸ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁴⁹ Bates, *1951* (Bates Productions, 2001).

Scott offered a different explanation; after describing strikebreakers beginning work on 26 April Scott stated: “The strikebreakers slowly grew in numbers and the following week the branch cracked.”⁵⁰ Scott suggested that strikebreakers were the catalyst to return to work as watersiders feared for their jobs. The Department of Labour figures support Scott’s argument; on 26 April, 126 strikebreakers had registered to work in New Plymouth. A third of these had previously been members of the NZWWU, two-thirds had not, the highest percentage of outside workers at any port.⁵¹ The 82 workers who were not members of the union were a threat to the jobs of NZWWU members. New Plymouth workers watching other men do their jobs faced the possibility of not ever returning to the wharf. This does not mean that Norman Quinlan was misrepresenting the decision, when he emotionally described the role hardship played in the decision to return to work in New Plymouth, but that faced with the possibility of losing their jobs permanently, their hardship became much more difficult to withstand. New Plymouth workers based their decisions not just on short-term hardship, but on the long-term threat to their ability to work on the wharf.

At the beginning of May, winter was coming. 1951 was a cold year; in the South Island it snowed before the end of April.⁵² As month followed month, the situation for workers worsened; savings were used up, and the hardships people faced were exacerbated over time. There was no progress in negotiating a possible return to work, and in the branches workers complained they did not get enough information.⁵³ The only changes in May were that new unions were formed in more ports, and more strikebreakers started work. The vast majority of strikebreakers had not previously worked on the waterfront, and so threatened existing workers’ jobs.⁵⁴ The immediate costs of the lockout, and the possibility of not being able to return to work on the wharf, put immense pressure on locked-out workers, but most watersiders chose to continue to bear the costs of the dispute rather than becoming ‘scabs’.

⁵⁰ Scott, *151 Days*, p.103.

⁵¹ Strike Returns, 26 April 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵² Young, ‘The Activities and Problems of the Police in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute’, p.61.

⁵³ New Zealand Waterside Workers’ Union ‘Circular to Branches’, May 31 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁵⁴ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

On 8 June, Port Chalmers watersiders voted to return to work as a branch.⁵⁵ By the end of May, Port Chalmers was one of the few ports where no new union had been formed. In early June, there were moves to register a new union. Such an organisation would threaten the jobs of NZWWU members in a one-industry town.⁵⁶ Neil Crichton, the president of the Port Chalmers branch, stated publicly that it was hardship, and the threat of strikebreakers that drove watersiders back.⁵⁷ In Port Chalmers, the return to work in June was partly driven by short-term economic hardship, but it was also driven by the threat of strikebreakers, the same factors that had led New Plymouth workers back to the wharf. The decision at Port Chalmers had a ripple effect in Dunedin, which was a separate branch from Port Chalmers, but only 15 kilometres away. On 10 June 1951, just seven Dunedin NZWWU members had registered with the Department of Labour to work as strikebreakers, on 11 June another 51 registered.⁵⁸ After this jump the number of watersiders working as strikebreakers in Dunedin remained steady until the end of the dispute. Throughout the dispute, strikebreakers begat strikebreakers; the more strikebreakers worked on the wharf, the more NZWWU members joined them.⁵⁹

On 29 May 1951, the new union in Auckland had 1,400 members, and the executive decided to close its membership.⁶⁰ Once this occurred, substantial numbers of Auckland watersiders began seeking work in other industries as they believed they would not be able return to work on the wharf. Some sought permission from the union branch; in the first three months of the lockout, just ten men applied for clearance, in early June there were five applications for clearance a week, and in the last week of June there were over twenty.⁶¹ Some applications addressed this directly; one watersider wrote: “the way I figure things I’d never get a job back on the wharf so I think I’d better get my clearance and try and get another job to replenish my swag again.”⁶² Many more Auckland members found other work without getting formal clearance. On 11 June, the police estimated that 250 members, more than ten per cent, had left the union in

⁵⁵ Hotere, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers’, p.78.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.81.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.79.

⁵⁸ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁹ The study of strikebreakers who had not previously worked on the wharf is unfortunately outside the scope of this thesis.

⁶⁰ Strike Returns, 29 May 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

⁶¹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meetings of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 27 February–10 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶² R. B. Jones to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth papers, ATL.

Auckland, with or without clearances.⁶³ The police do not appear to have been exaggerating. On June 23, the relief committee revealed that two hundred members had stopped collecting relief over the previous fortnight.⁶⁴ After four months, the only reason a watersider would stop collecting relief would be if he had found other work. The dramatic increase in Auckland watersiders who applied for clearance or took other work without clearance in June, demonstrated that workers were making their own assessment of the costs of continuing the dispute. Once Auckland watersiders realised that they would not work on the wharf again, many decided they could not remain part of the lockout.

Union branches attempted to use relief to minimize the cost to workers of continuing the dispute. After a group of Auckland unionists advocated returning to work in May, the relief committee issued a double meat ration.⁶⁵ In Auckland, when watersiders applied for permission to work in other industries they were often sent to the relief committee to see if their needs could be met that way.⁶⁶ The branch did not, however, have enough money to meet the urgent needs of all its members. On 31 May, the executive discussed the urgency of the situation: “relief was the most important matter facing the union. Unless we can give relief to the members they will walk away”.⁶⁷ Two weeks later the same issue was discussed, with more urgency. Mr McClean, a member of the relief committee argued: “most of the members want to go back to the waterfront as they are desperate and in need of more relief.”⁶⁸ As watersiders had progressively less hope of getting their jobs back, branches tried to provide more relief, but they did not have the resources. In early June, the Auckland branch thought they had reached an agreement with national office that they would be provided with £1,200 a week out of the donations from the Australian watersiders— three fifths of what relief cost.⁶⁹ However, they received £300 the week after this agreement was made, and £250 the

⁶³ Telephone Message Detective Sergeant R. Jones, 11 May 1951, (R10074966), ADMO-21007-W5595/1-25/9/20/1, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

⁶⁴ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 23 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁵ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 10 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁶ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 5 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 31 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁸ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 11 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁹ R. Jones to Toby Hill, 11 June 1951, 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

next.⁷⁰ On June 28, the Auckland branch wrote to Toby Hill in an almost hostile tone inviting him: “to make a report of monies received and payments made by the national office since the beginning of the present dispute.”⁷¹ Early in the dispute, the national office had struggled to get donations from Australia to New Zealand, but by this point, the national office had managed to move about £25,000 across the Tasman.⁷² The final accounts of the NZWWU revealed that the Auckland branch received just £1,600 between February and mid-July.⁷³ The Auckland branch had to operate from its own resources.

In June, the Auckland relief committee did not have the resources to dissuade those who were thinking of seeking other work from taking it, so they were forced to start granting members clearances, in a much wider range of circumstances than they had previously. On 7 June 1951, the executive granted three men permission to take other work.⁷⁴ Two days later, another nine men were granted leave by the union to get other work and just one was turned down.⁷⁵ At the same meeting, the head of the relief committee said: “the question as far as finance was concerned was desperate. [...] It would be necessary to have another £1000 by next Wednesday if relief was to be given to our members.”⁷⁶ On 11 June, in an executive meeting, Alex Drennan said that as far as he was concerned, no more releases would be granted.⁷⁷ Drennan’s position was unsustainable; two days later the executive granted another leave of absence and five days after that they granted another two, and put several off to be considered later.⁷⁸ When the cases of those who had been put off were considered, they were almost all granted; on 23 June, the release committee granted eleven workers leaves of absence and turned down only one.⁷⁹ The executive was making serious decisions when it gave so many men permission to take other work, as can be seen from the role that Auckland

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ R. Jones to Toby Hill, 18 June 1951, 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷² [Rough Accounts], New Zealand Waterside Workers Union, 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 7 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁵ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 9 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁶ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 9 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 11 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁸ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 13 June, 18 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁷⁹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 23 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

watersiders taking other work played in Huntly miners' memories of the dispute. Taking other work had the same meaning it did earlier in the dispute; it was still just one step above 'scabbing'.

Wellington watersiders faced a less bleak situation than most ports. Wellington had the lowest number of strikebreakers of any port where a new union had been formed, a fact that Bassett attributes to the strong local economy.⁸⁰ Therefore, workers felt more confident about their ability to get back to work on the waterfront eventually. The Wellington branch also received £8,330 from the Australian unions' donations, which was five times the amount that the Auckland branch received during the dispute.⁸¹ On 20 June, a delegate from the Wellington branch came to talk to the Auckland branch and was minuted as follows:

Mr. Stewart said he brought fraternal greetings from the Wellington Branch. He considered that if adequate relief was given to members we would win this fight. He considered that more could be done in Auckland regarding the relief organisation. In Wellington it was the policy to grant £1 worth of groceries per week to each member and 10/- for each child. Apart from that they received fruit and vegetables.⁸²

This caused some conflict and consternation among the Auckland branch, where the relief committee was spending 2/6 per member per week, and did not have money for any more.⁸³

Although June was a crucial month, few workers returned to work as 'scabs' in this period. Leaving aside ports where collective decisions were made to return to work, there were approximately 400 former watersiders working on the wharves on 4 June 1951, a little over five per cent of union members in those ports. On 4 July, a month later, only another 169 workers had taken work as strikebreakers. Almost a third of these were Dunedin workers who went back to work in the aftermath of Port Chalmers'

⁸⁰ Strike Returns, 1 June 1951–1 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO; Bassett, *Confrontation* '51, p.165.

⁸¹ [Rough Accounts], New Zealand Waterside Workers Union, 1951, 88-311, Hill Papers, ATL.

⁸² Emphasis in original, NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 20 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁸³ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 21 June 1951, 94-106-11/01; Relief Committee, Auckland Branch, NZWWU, 'Report', 1951, 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL.

decision. Just forty miners were strikebreaking, all open-cast miners from Huntly.⁸⁴ While individuals wanted to go back to work, and the toll on workers was getting heavier, most men were not prepared to go back as scabs, and instead they waited, or got other work.

The national leadership of the union did not acknowledge how the situation was deteriorating in some ports. For example, at the end of May, when the new Auckland union had 1,400 members, the national office sent a circular to branches stating: “we are reliably informed that the maximum number working on the waterfront [in Auckland] is between 500 and 700. It is not a permanent labour force but scabs brought down for a fortnight and then returned to their industries.”⁸⁵ At a meeting of unions directly involved in the dispute in mid-June, Jock Barnes denied that large numbers of watersiders had taken other work.⁸⁶ Whether this was because he was not aware of the number who had gotten other work in Auckland, or if he was trying to shore up support, is not clear from the minutes. At this meeting, some United Mineworkers’ branches stated that they were not sure they were going to be able to continue. Their jobs were not immediately in jeopardy, but the strike had a high cost, and was not having the desired effect: “We felt that the Army could produce sufficient opencast coal to defeat the ends of the strike. Very little relief had been forthcoming and the going was tough”.⁸⁷ By remaining on strike miners were risking their union: “Mr Lawson stated that the Waikato Central committee was of the opinion that if the decision was to ‘fight on’ the majority would loyally carry on but there would be casualties with one or two branches returning to work and that the unity they had succeeded in establishing in the Waikato would be destroyed. He regretted having to speak this way nevertheless it was best to speak frankly among friends.”⁸⁸ However, the meeting ended up endorsing the continuance of the dispute. Individual members, particularly in Auckland, were assessing the situation and deciding that the cost was too high and the union was not going to win, but the national apparatus of the union was not.

⁸⁴ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁸⁵ NZWWU, ‘Circular to Branches’, May 31 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁸⁶ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁸⁷ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

In the first week of July, a cascade of local decisions at ports and mines made the continuation of the dispute untenable. At the June meeting, miners' representatives had expressed how difficult their position was.⁸⁹ On 26 and 27 June, miners in eight mines in the Buller district returned to work.⁹⁰ Thirteen days earlier their representatives had said that the Buller Central committee "would have difficulty in holding the position for more than a week."⁹¹ Other mines followed; between Tuesday 3 July and Friday 6 July miners at all mines but one returned to work.⁹² Miners at Ohura returned to work the following week on Monday 9 July.⁹³ Miners were assessing whether or not watersiders could win; at a joint union meeting in Auckland on 5 July, Mr Baxter said: "they have found it very difficult to hold their members owing to the economic situation [...] the miners could see no hope of a settlement. If there was any hope they would have held out."⁹⁴ After they had returned to work, the miners explained their action by the high cost of continuing the dispute and their belief that the NZWWU could not win.

By the beginning of July, in Auckland, the number of watersiders who were seeking other work made the dispute unsustainable for the branch as a whole. When the executive met on Tuesday 3 July, the day after the miners returned to work, the executive granted fourteen requests for clearance, and declined six.⁹⁵ They were concerned about the effect this number of releases would have on the morale of other members and decided not tell the applicants straight away, but to wait until after the members' meeting the next day.⁹⁶ At the same meeting, the executive passed a motion that demonstrated they did not believe the dispute could continue: "That national office be advised of the true situation of the Auckland branch."⁹⁷ At a members' meeting the following day, Wednesday 4 July, Alex Drennan spoke about clearances:

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ 'Department of Labour, Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute', Buller, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO.

⁹¹ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

⁹² Department of Labour, Final Returns of Strike or Industrial Dispute', Miners, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO.

⁹³ Department of Labour, Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute', Ohura, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, ANZ-WO.

⁹⁴ Minutes of Joint Action Committee, 5 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹⁵ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 3 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

Mr Drennan drew the members attention to the fact that at every meeting resolutions were moved to stand firm with the National organisation and these resolutions were carried unanimously but immediately after these meetings some of the members were applying for releases. Although he considered it was better for them to apply for release than to walk away from the union he was of the opinion that if they were unable to carry on the struggle any longer they should intimate that to members.⁹⁸

The members' meeting then passed an even more urgent motion: "that this branch considers the National Strike Committee should be called together immediately to reconsider policy in the light of the deterioration in the situation".⁹⁹ The number of members who had taken other work gave the Auckland branch no choice but to seek an end to the dispute.

Lyttelton workers voted to return to work on Wednesday 4 July. The number of strikebreakers in Lyttelton had increased throughout June, and a large number of workers wanted to return to work. A substantial number of Lyttelton workers had wanted to return to work for some time.¹⁰⁰ On Thursday 5 July, the branch met again, and reversed the decision of the previous day, but it was too late. The number of locked-out watersiders who had registered that they wished to work on the wharf increased from 37 on 4 July to 190 and then 286 over the next two days.¹⁰¹ The waterside workers who had taken work on the Lyttelton waterfront in the first week of July increased the number of workers registered with the new union to 700.¹⁰² There had been 800 waterside workers in Lyttelton before the dispute; the 500 workers who remained out in Lyttelton knew that not everyone would be able to return to work, when there were only 100 jobs remaining.¹⁰³

When a branch voted to return to work, as several branches did, the question of whether a worker was being loyal became more complicated. Port Chalmers men emphasised that they had returned to work en masse, and therefore they were not 'scabs'. Lyttelton had a close vote on returning to work, a month before the 4 July vote,

⁹⁸ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 4 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Report of E G Ward, Lyttelton, 5 June 1951, (R10074969), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/20/2, Part 2, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰¹ Strike Returns, 1 July 1951–12 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

and those who had voted to return to work respected the collective decision and remained out.¹⁰⁴ However, when a collective decision legitimised the return to work, 250 watersiders registered to work on the waterfront.¹⁰⁵ This shows how strongly Lyttelton watersiders wanted to return to work, but also did not want to be ‘scabs’. Workers who made a collective branch decision, separate from the national union, saw that decision as legitimising a return to work.

At the NZWWU meeting in mid-June Eddie Napier, a Wellington watersider, argued: “provided the leaders remained solid the rank and file would remain loyal.”¹⁰⁶ The situation was more complicated than that. Most workers did value loyalty highly, and had no wish to be ‘scabs’. Only 597 NZWWU members, less than ten per cent, returned to work as strikebreakers in ports where the branch did not vote to return collectively.¹⁰⁷ However, NZWWU members were not just following their leaders. Workers made decisions to withdraw from the dispute, through individual decisions to find other work, and by voting to return to work in collective decisions. The dispute ended in July because of a cascade of local and individual decisions by workers, which finally forced the national executive into acting.

Having established that the decisions made by workers were important, this chapter will now turn to the role of the family in those decisions. NZWWU members who withdrew from the dispute presented their decision to do so in terms of their families. When Neil Crichton discussed the decision of the Port Chalmers branch to go back he stated: “I think it is a crime to starve women and children and I will not be party to it.”¹⁰⁸ Most workers who were applying for clearance in Auckland framed their need to withdraw from the dispute in terms of their family. Descriptions of economic pressure were a constant in the requests for clearances; some men described their economic situation in

¹⁰⁴ See. Strike Returns, 6 June 1951–12 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰⁵ Strike Returns, 4 July 1951–12 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰⁶ NZWWU, Minutes of Special Meeting of the National Executive, 12 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

¹⁰⁷ Strike Returns, 9 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

¹⁰⁸ Emphasis in original, *Otago Daily Times*, 9 June 1951, p. 8, quoted in Hotere, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers’, p.79.

some detail, while others simply stated that they could not continue.¹⁰⁹ The family was also central to the way the applications were understood and discussed by the executive. For example, in May, John Wood centred his application for clearance on the needs of his family:

I wish to ask my executive for my clearance from the union as I find it impossible to carry on I am now getting into financial difficulty and also I have no money left to buy the extra food that is needed by my family. I am very thankful for the ration given me by the relief committee but they are not enough for my family also the wife and family need winter clothing and other necessities of life.¹¹⁰

The union branch refused Wood's application, but they accepted the way he framed the application with his family situation: at the bottom of his letter '2 children' was written in pencil, although he was refused clearance.¹¹¹ Those involved in applying for and granting clearances accepted that family deprivation was a reason for withdrawing from the dispute, though in May the Auckland branch rarely granted those applications.

Threats to families' health also recur in the letters, as a reason a watersider might not be able to continue. Al Rukaird was clear about the health costs of the dispute within his family: "I hereby tender my resignation to your union. My reason for doing so is firstly owing to my wife's illness these last four months and myself having been under the doctor with my heart these last two years and on his advice I have to give up heavy work."¹¹² Similar care was taken with guarding women's health, particularly when it came to reproduction: "my wife who had to go for a stay with her family as a 'child was on the way' and also owing to our difficult straits had taken seriously ill and I was sent for. At the time I was being looked after at Gerry Woods place in 'Tamaki' and he will vouch for this as he helped me sell my radio; the proceeds of which enabled to make my way down here (in a hurry)".¹¹³ Family health crises, just as other forms of family need, were commonly put forward as reasons that watersiders would be unable to continue.

¹⁰⁹ For example, N. Coole to R. Jones, 5 June 1951, 94-106-11/04; W. French to R. Jones, 13 June 1951, 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers ATL.

¹¹⁰ John Wood to R. Jones, 7 July 1951, 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹¹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 7 May 1951, 94-106-11/01; John Wood to R. Jones, 7 July 1951, 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹² Al Rukaird to R. Jones, 28 May 1951, 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹³ W. Taylor to R. Jones, 21 May 1951, 94-106-11/03, ATL.

The other side of families being the most acceptable reason to express a desire to withdraw from the dispute was that wives were portrayed as a threat to the dispute. In oral history accounts, NZWWU members state that other men were driven back to work by their wives, a narrative that predates 1951.¹¹⁴ In 2010, Tom Gregory, who had been a Wellington watersider in 1951, told a woman in her early thirties who asked him about the lockout: “A lot of the wives in them days – you see you’ve got no idea – a lot of the wives in them days were trying to force their husbands to go to work”.¹¹⁵ When explaining the New Plymouth branch’s decision to return to work, Norman Quinlan used the same image as Gregory did and argued that men had to return to work or else their wives would divorce them.¹¹⁶ Tom H. made the same argument, but acknowledged the context: “It wasn’t that the wives were opposing the strike really – but God there was nothing to eat no money coming in.”¹¹⁷

There are contemporary references to women who wanted their husbands to return to work recorded during the dispute, but they are often euphemistic. In the minutes of the Auckland executive meetings, the term ‘domestic troubles’ was used to explain why some men wanted to get other work.¹¹⁸ James Parker used the same term when he was seeking clearance: “Financially I am well in the cart and Domestically things are now as bad for me as they can be.”¹¹⁹ Mr Coole was more explicit in the way he used existing narratives about women and industrial disputes: “I do not wish to shelter behind my wife’s skirts, but after the 2 year period of compo [accident compensation] she did not take too kindly to my temporary lack of cash.”¹²⁰ Coole was using, and simultaneously distancing himself from, the idea that his wife was driving him back to work. In the end he would rather be seen as someone who hid behind his wife’s skirts, than someone who abandoned the dispute without good reason, and so he put the decision on her. Accounts like Tom Gregory’s, Norman Quinlan’s, or the minutes of the Auckland executive, only show how men decided to present their family situation to other men.

¹¹⁴ Beasley, ‘Soldiers of the Federation’, p.111.

¹¹⁵ Tom and Pat Gregory Oral History, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹¹⁶ Bates, *1951* (Bates Productions, 2001).

¹¹⁷ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

¹¹⁸ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 25 May 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹¹⁹ James Parker to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹²⁰ N. Coole to R. Jones, 5 June 1951, 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

Two oral history accounts describe families where the wife did want her husband to get other work. Ron S described his wife's position:

My wife was very hostile [...] To her you know – they suffered – the family – there's no doubt – the family suffered. And she thought well – as far as she's concerned – oh no she did support me – the marvellous support that she gave me – but later on she woke up – [...] – 'forget about the working-class struggle go and get yourself into business and make some money'.¹²¹

In his interview, Ron S. made it clear that in 1951 he left the responsibility of managing without money with his wife. Here he presents her changing her mind as the result of the circumstances; she supported him and tried to persuade him to get other work (which he did not do). Maureen Fairey discussed the family dynamics around work in her oral history:

I'm not saying she didn't agree with it, but I think she thought he probably took too strong a position in that he didn't go back – like he didn't take any other work on at that time and she – I know it affected – because she was always short of money – I think it really affected their relationship.¹²²

Fairey presented her parents' conflict over her father not taking other work as part of the wider picture of a deeply unhappy, unequal relationship. Maureen Fairey's mother's opinion about the dispute did not change her father's actions, and the power dynamic within their relationship was set well before 1951. Neither Ron S. nor Maureen Fairey's father took other work, and their wives did not have the power to make them.

Just as 'scab' and loyal worker stood as oppositional identities, a loyal woman was the opposite of a nagging wife. Doug Johnson described his mother in terms that made her sound like the ideal union woman: "Through the strike I don't think I ever heard my mother complain. I think she was of the opinion that her menfolk were on strike, and it was her job to support them, and she supported us very well. Bless her heart."¹²³

Women do not claim the role of the nagging wife who drove their husband back to work for themselves, but they do claim its opposite. Tom Gregory's wife, Pat Gregory, described her attitude towards the dispute in terms that fitted the role she claimed: "I

¹²¹ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

¹²² Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹²³ Bates, *1951* (Bates Productions, 2001).

was all for it of course”.¹²⁴ Maureen Martin claimed the role of supportive wife as well: “Well I wasn’t surprised about it, but I wasn’t happy about him being on strike. But when it came to their principles, well of course they would have to uphold and that’s it.”¹²⁵ Loyal women were committed to the importance of their husbands not ‘scabbing’ – and did their job, which was to make ends meet.¹²⁶ Both roles positioned the cost of the dispute as women’s central concern: nagging wives drove their husbands back to work because they could not carry the cost, while loyal women coped with the cost and did not complain. This dichotomy has been so strong that there has been little space for any other way of positioning women in relation to the dispute.

To understand the decisions that workers were making during strikes and lockouts, historians have to understand the way powerful dichotomies about loyal behaviour shaped people’s actions and beliefs and also explore what gets hidden because it does not fit with these dichotomies. The loyal worker was someone who would not dream of ‘scabbing’ and a loyal wife would never ask him to. This construction ignores the fact that, in five long months, workers and their families could think and feel many different things. In addition, it renders the decisions workers made, and had to keep on making to continue the dispute, invisible.

So far this chapter has largely followed ‘scab lists’ and union behaviour by treating ‘scab’ as an absolute term, but during 1951 the meaning of ‘scab’ was contested. In Timaru, there were 43 men working on the wharves on 23 April, the day before locked-out workers returned to work as a branch. Those 43 workers were treated as ‘scabs’ by the unionists who returned to work on 24 April. As Lloyd Jenkin, a Timaru watersider put it: “Timaru in itself while being ostracised by some elements of the waterfront era – weren’t as badly treated as they treated ones that they perceived as scabs.”¹²⁷ The Timaru branch maintained its right to determine who was a ‘scab’. Likewise Port Chalmers workers argued about their status, and whether or not they were ‘scabs’. Andrea Hotere interviewed Ray Percy, one of the Port Chalmers watersiders who

¹²⁴ Tom and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹²⁵ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

¹²⁶ These two images are at the centre of Renée’s play *Pass it On*, which humanized and made real ideas of women that were often much flatter Renée, *Pass It On*.

¹²⁷ Lloyd Jenkin interview with Shuan Ryan, 4 May 1999, Trade Union Oral History Project, OHInt-0478/10, OHC-ATL.

refused to return to work, “Ray remembers several men saying to him ‘well, we weren’t McNabs [scabs] because we went back as a body.’ He would respond with ‘where’s your driving licence [loyalty card]?’ Only those twelve men who stayed out till 11 July, 1951, had received them.”¹²⁸ There was space between a loyal worker and a ‘scab’; hundreds of workers in Auckland, Timaru, Lyttelton, Port Chalmers and New Plymouth never received loyalty cards, but their names were not put on any ‘scab list’.

Some evidence survives of workers who thought about returning to work and then decided not to; these narratives offer a way around the dichotomies about loyal behaviour. On 6 April 1951, Mrs Price went to visit her friend Mrs Hunter; both their husbands worked in the Nelson Cement works, and both were on strike in support of the watersiders.¹²⁹ They discussed their financial situation, and how they were surviving without wages. The company was attempting to re-open the cement works on 9 April. The two women discussed how many men would go back to work then. Mrs Hunter said that anyone who did go back would be going back ‘as a scab’. The conversation ended there, as Mrs Hunter and Mrs Price were interrupted by the baker, who was delivering bread. Mr Price had planned on going back to work, but when his wife told him what Mrs Hunter had said, he changed his mind, and refused to work in the cement works anymore.¹³⁰ The police investigated Mr Price’s decision not to go back to work ‘as a scab’, and interviewed both Mrs Price and Mrs Hunter, which is why such mundane details such as the interruption from the baker have survived to become part of the historical record.¹³¹

The story of Mr Price almost strikebreaking was very rare, because it was recorded by police at the time. The threat of police action meant that those involved talked about what had happened in a way that few were willing to do in other circumstances. However, there is evidence that the way that Price’s decision occurred was not unusual. Mr Gibson had a son who was on strike as a seaman and his son-in-law talked of getting work on the Wellington waterfront. Gibson told his son-in-law that if he broke the strike he would no longer be welcome in Gibson’s house, and the son-in-law did

¹²⁸ Hotere, ‘The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers’, p.82.

¹²⁹ CIB Blenheim Memo ‘Alleged Intimidation of Workmen at Tarakohe and Alleged Picketing at Tarakohe of Golden Bay Cement Co. Works’, (R10074972), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/50/5, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ The complete history of that investigation can be found in the Nelson Districts Special Branch file about the dispute: (R10074972), ADMO-21007-W5595-25/9/50/5, Restricted Files, ANZ-WO.

not take the work.¹³² Maureen Martin, whose husband was a striking freezing worker, described talking with women whose husbands were also on strike:

Well, we used to meet in Plunket rooms or out shopping and talk it over, say 'who's gone back in?' and some would say 'my husband wants to go back in' and some would say 'my husband would never go back in'. We used to discuss all that sort of thing and when they said they wanted to go back I would say 'he is going to let down the rest of the men who have been out all this time and he's going to let himself down and his family down too.'¹³³

Martin tried to persuade women whose husbands were thinking about taking other work, to tell them not to.

The effect of a family's relationships within the wider community could have a real impact on workers' willingness to work as strikebreakers. In Lyttelton, there was considerable conflict among watersiders in the aftermath of the vote to return to work on 4 July. Those who had returned to work between 4 July and the official end of the dispute a week later were not quite 'scabs', but they did not receive a loyalty card.¹³⁴ The list of loyalty card holders, which has survived, provides information about who took the opportunity to return to work, when given it.¹³⁵ Approximately half of those who lived outside of Lyttelton received loyalty cards, while about 90 per cent of those who lived in Lyttelton received loyalty cards.¹³⁶ Living in a community where the majority of workers were connected to the wharf made men much less willing to work as a strikebreaker; they and their families had too many relationships that pulled against that decision.

The importance of these community relationships can also be seen in Greymouth and Westport. These towns were mining communities, and the miners were out on strike in support of the watersiders. No-one registered to work as a strikebreaker in Westport.

¹³² Jim Gibson interview with Grace Millar, 14 March 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

¹³³ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

¹³⁴ Johnny Mitchell, 'Report of Acting Secretary, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union', February 1952, 94-106-10/02, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹³⁵ [List of Watersiders], MB 550/38, Frank McNulty Papers, MBL.

¹³⁶ Townsend, 'From Bureau to Lockout', p.14.; [List of Watersiders], MB 550/38, Frank McNulty Papers, MBL; Strike Returns, 1 June 1951–1 July 1951, (R387559), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

Just seven men registered to work as strikebreakers in Greymouth; these men never started work as seven was considered insufficient to form a new union.¹³⁷ The West Coast mining areas had a strong union history and culture.¹³⁸ If anyone thought of returning to work then their friends, family members, people they met at Plunket, out shopping, or at the pub, would remind them not to ‘scab’.

The dichotomy between a loyal worker and a scab was widely understood throughout working-class communities. Only one example has survived of a woman who left her husband as a result of the dispute; she did so because he worked as a strikebreaker.¹³⁹ The most visible work in policing ‘scabs’ was done by union members and aimed at men, but it relied upon other relationships within working-class communities, and acceptance of this construction of ‘scabs’ was part of working-class identity. This construction was completely alien to Arthur Larsen, an Auckland minister, who worked on the wharf for two weeks in June 1951. After Alex Hodge, an Auckland watersider, criticised Larsen’s actions, Larsen wrote to Hodge presenting his action of working as a strikebreaker as a disinterested act of public service:

Then, I must say that it appears to me ludicrous and unfair for your friends to class me with those who have forsaken their association with your union and deliberately taken sides against you. At no time have I regarded myself as involved in the dispute. It was a call to emergency service to the nation that brought me to tackle work which is uncongenial to one of sedentary habits. The fortnight I have promised expires this week and that will see the end of my service.

It is not likely that I could say anything which would make my disinterested motives clear to your friends while feelings are running so high, but I indulge the hope that you will see my point.¹⁴⁰

Larsen’s ability to completely ignore the construction of a strikebreaker as a ‘scab’, shows how class specific that construction was. The rest of this chapter has shown how widely it was understood among both unionists and their families.

Ultimately, men voted in union meetings and men made the decisions to return to work, to take other work, or to remain loyal. There were two competing pressures on men – the cost of continuing and the desire to be loyal and not being branded as a

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ See Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community*.

¹³⁹ Notes from interview with Mr C. F. Austin, 14 July 1952, 0293, Walter Nash Papers, ANZ-WO.

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Larsen to Alex Hodge, 15 June 1951, 94/06/09-07, Roth Papers, ATL.

‘scab’. The vast majority of watersiders, and striking workers, had a very strong desire not be seen as ‘scabs’, even though many very much wanted to return to work. The two competing desires can be seen throughout the chapter, but particularly from the number of workers who returned in New Plymouth, Timaru, Port Chalmers and Lyttelton once a branch collective decision had legitimised it. Most workers cared more about being ‘scabs’ in the eyes of their community, than their comrades in other ports.

Men made their decisions in the context of their families. Family was the most socially acceptable reason to want to withdraw from the dispute, and appears frequently in men’s justifications for why they made the decisions they did. Families were seen as a risk; unionists were worried that women would drive their husbands back to work. In part, this was an acknowledgement of where the costs of the dispute fell. Women were both perceived, and often were, more concerned about the costs of the dispute than their husbands. The rhetoric of family that Crichton used to explain the Port Chalmers branch’s decision to return to work was less complex than actual family relationships. Women were not just concerned about cost; they were part of the web of relationships in working-class communities that created and maintained ‘scab’ as an outcast identity.

Understanding decisions made during the dispute is obscured by the strength of dichotomies that defined men as either loyal or a scab. In most discussions of the dispute, men defined their female relatives, and women defined themselves, as either nagging or loyal. The lack of shading obscures the complexities of the situation. Women, like men, changed their views over the course of the dispute. There is much about decision-making during this period that has become inaccessible, both through the passage of time, and because both women and men are reluctant to reveal any attitude towards the dispute that marks them as disloyal. However, the inaccessibility of workers’ decision-making processes should not obscure the fact that workers were continually making decisions. Almost eighty-five per cent of workers involved decided to remain part of the dispute until July. Historians must acknowledge when and how workers have made decisions to return to work; without this acknowledgement, the decisions made every day to continue the dispute will remain invisible.

Chapter 7: 'We never recovered': The Cost

On 11 July 1951, Sidney Holland dissolved parliament and announced a snap election.¹ Four days later, waterside workers returned to work where there were still jobs for them to return to, and the 1951 waterfront lockout formally ended. On 18 July 1951, Cabinet revoked some Emergency Regulations, but left others intact.² Eight days later, the Emergency Regulations were revoked in full.³ The dispute dominated the election campaign. The NZWWU, such as it existed at this point, campaigned hard for the Labour Party.⁴ The election was held on 1 September 1951, and the National Party won, as it would win seven out of the next nine elections.⁵

The lives of families who had been locked out or on strike did not return to normal. This chapter will examine the costs of the dispute for families in the years after 1951. The end of the dispute was a time of rupture and transition, as most waterside workers had to find other work. Five months without wages had taken their toll, damaging bodies and relationships. Families' financial situations remained strained until they had paid off the money they had borrowed to survive during 1951. This chapter will argue that debt and hardship in the aftermath of a dispute should be treated as an integral part of the historical understanding of any industrial struggle.

The aftermath of the 1951 waterfront lockout and supporting strikes has received much less attention than its origins. In *Confrontation '51*, Bassett argued that the 1951 waterfront dispute shaped the post-war political landscape, and helped make National the natural party of government for the next two decades.⁶ Bassett's argument has had traction among other scholars.⁷ Historians have also discussed the industrial effects of 1951: Christine Meade's MA thesis focused on the structure of waterfront unions from

¹ Grant, ed., *The Big Blue*, p.187.

² 'The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951, Amendment No. 4', *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, pp.560-61.

³ 'Revocation of Proclamation of Emergency and of Emergency Regulations', *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.591.

⁴ Auckland Watersiders' Union (Deregistered.) 'Holland Must be Defeated', 6/33, A-139, Bill McAra Papers, AUL.

⁵ Chapman, 'From Labour to National', p.358.

⁶ Bassett, *Confrontation '51*, p.212.

⁷ Brooking, *The History of New Zealand*; Chapman, 'From Labour to National'; Gustafson, *The National Governments and Social Change (1949-1972)*; Pat Walsh, 'The Legacy of '51,' in *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, David Grant, ed., Christchurch, 2004.

the end of the dispute to 1967, when a new national union was formed.⁸ She described the long struggle to regain any form of national unity. Pat Walsh has examined the legacy of 1951 in the context of the arbitration system and Cybèle Locke discussed the role that activists who had been involved in the dispute played in other parts of the union movement.⁹ This work on the political and industrial aftermath of the 1951 waterfront dispute is important, but the effect of the dispute outside of parliament, trades halls and workplaces has received less attention.

The historiography of the 1951 waterfront dispute is not unusual in this respect. Most historical accounts of industrial disputes, if they mention the aftermath at all, focus on the industrial legacy. David Camfield presented the rationale for this approach in his assessment of a recent Canadian health workers' strike: "A central question in any assessment of the HEU strike is what it represented for the working-class movement."¹⁰ Historians' focus on the industrial aftermath of industrial conflict is not surprising, those issues are important, but it does leave questions about the social effects of industrial disputes to one side. When historians do address the social costs of industrial disputes they tend to do so in ways that further underscores the marginalised nature of those questions. Historians have noted when social effects have industrial consequences, for example, financial stress in mining communities in 1926 was exacerbated because many families had not repaid their debts from the 1921 lockout.¹¹ Historians sometimes discuss the costs of industrial disputes as relevant to a particular question they are asking. For example, Timothy Minchin's article on the International Paper Company Strike of 1987-88, in the United States, focused on the employer's decision to permanently replace many workers and so he discussed the impact of

⁸ Meade, 'New Zealand Waterfront Unions, 1951-1967'.

⁹ Locke, *Workers in the Margins*, p.36; Walsh, 'The Legacy of '51'.

¹⁰ Camfield, 'Neoliberalism and Working-Class Resistance', p.37. Of the 47 articles discussed in the beginning of the thesis almost all of those that discussed the aftermath of a strike or lockout did so in industrial terms. For example, Anderson, "'Things Are Different Down Here'"; Blewett, 'Diversities of Class and Gender Experience and the Shaping of Labor Politics'; Camfield, 'Neoliberalism and Working-Class Resistance'; Sheila Cohen, 'The 1968-1974 Labour Upsurge in Britain and America: A Critical History, and a Look at What Might Have Been', *Labor History*, 49, 4, 2008; Michael Dennis, 'Chicago and the Little Steel Strike', *Labor History*, 53, 2, 2012; Dyrenfurth, "A Terrible Monster"; Milloy, 'A Battle Royal'; O'Malley, 'The Eclipse of Mateship'; Melanie Reynolds, "'A Man Who Won't Back a Woman Is No Man at All': The 1875 Heavy Woollen Dispute and the Narrative of Women's Trade Unionism', *Labour History Review*, 71, 2, 2006.

¹¹ Bruley, 'The Politics of Food', p.63; Steven Thompson, 'That Beautiful Summer of Severe Austerity: Health, Diet and the Working-Class Domestic Economy in South Wales in 1926', *The Welsh History Review*, 21, 3, 2003, p.564.

unemployment on workers and their families.¹² Even when historians discuss the social costs of a strike or lockout, they do not treat them as an integral part of industrial disputes.

In the first week of July 1951, the Auckland relief committee wrote a report of their work so far, and included a discussion of how they saw their role if the dispute continued:

If dispute concludes on Friday and as suggested by Mr. Drennan there will be an approximate period of three weeks for the rehabilitation of members costs will be in the same proportion as goods will be more plentiful and members unable to obtain work are entitled to a fuller ration than previous. On that basis a sum of approximately £4,000 will be required as credit firms, landlords, etc. will expect and demand full payment of commitments and not on a meagre, partial basis as at present.¹³

This statement is one of the few union sources that acknowledged that the effects of the dispute would last beyond the official end of the dispute, for union members and their families. Watersiders needed to find new work, and families had to repay those who had been extending them credit. Once the dispute ended, individual families' financial positions were no longer a collective union concern. During the dispute, family finances were a concern for the whole branch, as they could drive a watersider to work as a strikebreaker. Afterwards, the Seamen's Union became a creditor on its members. The end of the dispute marked an important transition, where the costs of being involved were individualised and privatised; they became the concern and responsibility of an individual and their family, not the union branch as a whole.

Once the dispute had ended, families had to pay for it. Debt was central to most families' survival. Family debt was a deeply private matter, leaving few records, so getting a sense of the level of debt families faced is a challenge. The institutions that extended credit to watersiders have either not placed their records in the archives, or the records they have kept did not illuminate this question.¹⁴ The only record of debt during

¹² Minchin, "Labor's Empty Gun", p.30.

¹³ 'Report', Relief Committee, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union (Auckland Branch), 94-106-11/06, Roth Papers, ATL

¹⁴ I have not located the records of any grocers. The SAC Archives do not contain records that shed light on watersiders repayment of debt, see (R18745547), AELE-19207-SAC10-5; (R20053489), AELE-19203-SAC1/47-8.4.2; (R20053372), AELE-19203-SAC1 17/5/76/1-Part 2, SAC, ANZ-WO. Neither the

the dispute that has survived is the Seamen's Union receipt book, which is a partial record of members' repayment of their strike debt to their union.¹⁵ R. Blackburn recorded the highest repayments; he repaid £40, which was six weeks to two months of a seaman's wage.¹⁶ Other seamen repaid significant amounts: 22 repaid more than £20, 46 between £10 and £20, and just over a hundred repaid less than £10.¹⁷ Another way of understanding the scale is to look at the typical size of bills that went unpaid. In 1951, SAC rent for a five room house was between £1/14/0 and £2/3/6 per week.¹⁸ A family that did not pay rent of £2 per week for the dispute would owe £40 to SAC, by July. Towards the end of 1951 minimum rates for labouring jobs were between £7/16/0 and £8/10/0. Unpaid rent could easily be more than a month's wages.¹⁹ N. Coole's hire purchase payments were £2/17/0; if he did not pay this for the duration of the dispute then he would owe £57, plus interest, which could have been two months' wages.²⁰ This level of debt, and the struggle to pay it off, shaped families' financial situations for years after the dispute had officially ended.

Only 2,200 former members of the watersiders union worked on the wharf in the second half of 1951; the other 6,200 had to find other work.²¹ Unemployment was very low in 1951; most workers found other work easily and many employers could not afford to black-list workers who had been involved in the dispute. There were three groups of workers who were vulnerable to blacklisting: those in small ports, those who took leadership positions during the dispute, and those seeking work in a small industry. Employers in provincial ports, such as Oamaru or Napier, could more easily isolate ex-

Farmers Corporate Records, nor their Archives at the Auckland Museum, provide relevant information about the policy or practice around hire purchase payments.

¹⁵ Auckland Seamen's Strike Committee - Financial records, 80-307-22/03, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, ATL.

¹⁶ Ibid; New Zealand Seamen Award, 16 December 1950, *New Zealand Awards Agreements & c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Apprentices Act and the Labour Disputes Investigation Act*, 1950, Vol.50, p.3651.

¹⁷ Auckland Seamen's Strike Committee - Financial records, 80-307-22/03, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, ATL.

¹⁸ 'State housing new and old - increase of rental charges' Appendix to head office circular memorandum, 31 March 1950, (R20053955), AELE-19203-SAC1/189-35.88-Part 2, SAC, ANZ-WO.

¹⁹ For examples, Wellington City Council Labourers Award 13 September 1950, *New Zealand Awards Agreements & c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Apprentices Act and the Labour Disputes Investigation Act*, 1950, Vol.50, pp.1382-3; New Zealand (except Westland and Canterbury) General Warehousemen (other than soft-goods) Amendment of Award, 12 April 1949, *New Zealand Awards Agreements & c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Apprentices Act and the Labour Disputes Investigation Act*, 1949, Vol.49, p.1261. For these calculations I have added the 15 per cent general wage order that sparked the 1951 waterfront dispute to the listed rates in the awards.

²⁰ N. Coole to R. Jones, 5 June 1951, 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

²¹ Strike Returns, Department of Labour, 1951, (R397500), AANK-W3285-7, Labour Department Library Various Files, ANZ-WO.

watersiders. Dennis Brown's family moved from Napier to Wellington in 1954, because his father had struggled to find employment in Napier after the lockout ended.²²

Employers were also successful in blacklisting individuals they believed were troublemakers. Conan Doyle, a freezing worker, started his own business as a fencer as the Wairoa freezing works did not hire him back for the next season.²³ A small number of Wellington freezing workers, including Max Bollinger, were also black-listed.²⁴ Jock Barnes started his own concreting business because no-one would hire him, and Toby Hill struggled to find new employment.²⁵ Finally, some workers who had training in a particular field were unable to enter it again because they were easy to blacklist. For example, R. Muir, a trained lithographic tin printer, was unable to get work, despite a general shortage in the industry, because he was known to have participated in the dispute.²⁶ In general, watersiders found new jobs quickly, but those who did not faced even more debt and financial hardship.

Even though most workers found other employment relatively easily, the differences between waterfront work and the new occupations ex-watersiders entered had an impact on their families. Many workers were not able to earn as much money in their new jobs as they had previously, as other industries did not have the same level of overtime. This cost of the dispute was unevenly distributed. Some waterside workers' economic situation improved when they left the wharf because they found better paying and more prestigious jobs, while others could only find lower-paying work. For example, Ian Church's father took work as a foreman at the dry dock in Port Chalmers after the dispute, whereas Maureen Fairey's father always earned less after the dispute than he had on the waterfront.²⁷ Tom H. described his new work situation succinctly: "I went to a worse job, with worse conditions and less pay".²⁸ Breadwinners getting new work resulted in transitions for the rest of the family. When Tom Gregory temporarily took a clerk's job, he worked fewer hours and so he was home more and his clothes

²² Dennis Brown interview with Grace Millar, 12 October 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²³ Conan Doyle interview with Hugo Manson, 1986, OH-Coll-011881, OHC-ATL.

²⁴ Rev. J. S. Somerville, 'notes on black-listed freezing workers', [1952], 396/39118, DC 3/5, PARC.

²⁵ Peter Franks, 'Hill, Tobias McGlinchy', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, available at <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5h21/hill-tobias-mcglinchy> updated 30 October 2012; Bramble, ed., *Never a White Flag*, pp.233-36.

²⁶ R. Muir to Minister of Labour, [November 1953], (R20437660), AANK-947-W3580-3/3/2022, Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, ANZ-WO.

²⁷ Ian Church interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011; Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

²⁸ Anna Green interview with watersider, mid-1980s.

were cleaner, which lessened his wife's laundry work.²⁹ In contrast, Dennis Brown's father worked as a barman after the dispute was over, and was home in the evenings even less than he had been as a watersider.³⁰

Jenny Cameron's father did not return to work on the Wellington waterfront and instead he took a job on the railways. When asked if this work was different Jenny Cameron said that it was: "Well he got in with a crowd and started drinking. And that was a very bitter period, because my mother hated drinking. Those years, 52, 53, 54, were very bitter years for me."³¹ For Jenny Cameron's father, the significance of his move from the waterfront to the railways was not related to the differences between these two workplaces, there was plenty of alcohol on the wharf, but his own relationships within that work. For his family, this transition nearly spelled disaster, which was only rectified when he changed jobs again and stopped drinking.

When the dispute ended, women who had started paid work during the dispute needed to decide whether to continue. For many women, the paid work they did during the dispute was considered temporary, because the work did not fit their lives, because they did not like their paid work, or because of the wider belief that they should not be in paid work. In Port Chalmers, many watersiders' wives took work in Dunedin factories, and only a few women remained in their jobs when the lockout was over.³² Some women hated their time in paid work; Colleen Lewis, for example, described her time at a factory making cardboard boxes as 'three months hard labour'.³³ However, in some oral history narratives there was ambiguity about the impact paid work had on women's lives. Andrea Hotere quoted Mrs Greer: "I couldn't have stayed at work anyway, ... I had a baby didn't I, I mean, my husband went straight back to work and expected that I'd go straight back home."³⁴ Hotere explained that Greer enjoyed working at Tudor clothing company and missed it when she returned home. The unpaid work that women did at home, and the expectations around married women in paid work, meant

²⁹ He eventually got back on the waterfront through the appeals process that operated in Wellington. Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³⁰ Dennis Brown, interview with Grace Millar, 12 October 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³¹ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³² Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', p.108.

³³ *ibid.*, p.92.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.108.

that some women who had enjoyed working during the dispute left as soon as their husbands returned to work.

Women who remained in paid work after the dispute seem to have chosen to do so; in oral history accounts, some men pressured their wives to leave paid employment, but no men pressured their wives to remain.³⁵ During the dispute, the money that women earned was less than their husband's wages had been, so even if women found paid work their families were still in a worse financial position than they had been previously. After the dispute, watersiders' wives were facing the same sorts of decisions as other married working-class women about paid work. However, the dispute changed the circumstances under which they were making those decisions. Maureen Fairey remembers her father arguing that no wife of his would ever take paid work, but financial necessity changed his mind. Her mother had to take paid work during the lockout, and she continued this work afterwards. Maureen Fairey believed her mother undertook paid work so that Maureen and her sisters would not miss out, as their father was not earning much.³⁶ Maureen Fairey's mother resented having to do paid work, and her husband for not earning enough money in his new job, but it was her decision that paid work was a better option than not having that income. Ida Thompson also continued her work as a cleaner after the dispute. She described her decision to do so in terms of the dispute: it had depleted the couple's savings and she was doing her part to build them up again.³⁷ The dispute had two main impacts on women's employment. First it challenged some ideas about married women's work that were widely held at the time; men who had previously said 'no wife of mine will work' had found themselves no longer able to afford to hold this position. Second, it changed most families' financial position for the worse, and therefore gave women reasons to stay in paid employment.

The dispute could have a significant impact on young adults who took their first job while their family economy was still recovering. Yvonne Grove, Toby Hill's daughter, did not get work during the dispute itself, but in the aftermath, when Hill was black-listed. She had hoped to go to university, but in 1954 she had to leave school and find

³⁵ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

³⁶ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

³⁷ Ida Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

work: "I knew if I could go to work it would bring some money into the house".³⁸

Many children faced a trade-off between earning the most they could then, or staying in school or starting an apprenticeship, which might provide them with a higher income later. The economic struggles families faced as a result of the dispute continued to shape their decisions about children leaving school and starting work long after July 1951.

The 1951 waterfront lockout and supporting strikes affected employment for families involved in two different ways. First, it was a point of rupture. The dispute disrupted existing employment patterns: men had to change jobs and women took paid work when they had not previously. The effect of this rupture varied between families; for some it was just a temporary transition, for some it provided new opportunities, while life got harder for others. Second, decisions about employment were constrained by the need to repay the on-going debt that families faced.

In oral histories about the dispute, those who were very involved in the unions talk in general terms about the impact of the dispute on other people. Union leaders mention divorce and suicide in their oral histories to convey the seriousness of the dispute and to show that while they were fine other people really suffered.³⁹ These generalised statements communicate an atmosphere of huge costs for a small number of people, and underplay the large amount of ill-health and relationship stress that existed alongside more catastrophic experiences.

Ill-health during and after the dispute was a common experience among watersiders' families. In one Auckland executive meeting, towards the end of the dispute, five of the twelve members who were granted release had one or more ill family member.⁴⁰ A Huntly woman, the wife of a striking coal-miner, attributed her sickness the following year to the stress of the dispute.⁴¹ Joe Dudley withdrew from the dispute: "I had to do something as my health was going I was under the doctor when the trouble started. But

³⁸ Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams', p.76.

³⁹ See Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Ted Thompson interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁴⁰ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 26 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴¹ Olive Boyd and Elizabeth Pendalton interview with Jamie Mackay, 7 February 1992, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHInt-0020/03, OHC-ATL.

didn't take it serious until I took a turn twice at the trades hall and then the accident when I just went from bad to worse."⁴² The effects of on-going ill-health could be serious.

Watersiders, and their families, often had existing health problems that they were worried about exacerbating. James Parker outlined his problems: "on top of this I have been to two doctors that I am on the verge of another Nervous breakdown is their own opinion. You will remember that in October I had shingles and though I went to work on the Drs advice I have not shook off that trouble and I have not been getting any better."⁴³ There were many other factors that meant watersiders already suffered ill-health: poverty, war service, work that wore out the body, and drinking as a common relief from stress.⁴⁴ Maureen Fairey described her father's declining health and his early death in her oral history interview. She knew that his health got worse after 1951 once he stopped working on the wharf, but mentioned many other reasons his health was poor.⁴⁵ The stress and deprivation of the dispute was not enough, by itself, to ruin the health of either watersiders or their family members. However, for those who were suffering ill-health, or were vulnerable to it, the extra stress and deprivation were serious risks.

Arnleigh Leith lived at Hotel Selwyn, 5 Hawker St, Wellington, a boarding house near the waterfront.⁴⁶ On 14 May 1951, he had been drinking; he wrote a last will and testament that outlined his debts:

I owe Alfred Rapson Selwyn Hotel £40-0-0
I owe Mitchell Farquahar of Titahi Bay £20-0-0
I owe William Fryer, Carrington St, £10-0-0⁴⁷

His doctor Martin Tweed (who donated significant contributions to the relief fund of the watersiders), had seen him three days before:

⁴² Joe Dudley to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴³ James Parker to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴⁴ A similar idea has been explored in reference to the 1926 lockout in Wales. Bruley, 'The Politics of Food'; Thompson, 'That Beautiful Summer of Severe Austerity'.

⁴⁵ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁴⁶ Long Sheung Chanwai, 'Witness Statement', 6 July 1951, (R18046977), ACGS-16231-J46-1951/916, Coroners Inquests – Case Files, ANZ-WO.

⁴⁷ Arnleigh Leith, 'Last Will & Testament', 14 May 1951, (R2344304), AAOM-6031-W3265-181/1390/51, Wellington probate files, ANZ-WO.

He complained of pain in the chest and palpitation. He was very nervous and said he was worried over the waterfront strike, as he wished to return to work. I could find no sign of any organic disease.; [...] I reassured him on several occasions and on the 11th of May 1951, when I last saw him, he was quite cheerful when he left my surgery.⁴⁸

On 14 May 1951, Arnleigh Leith killed himself.⁴⁹

All we know of Leith's life and death is from his interactions with the state. Leith had been a soldier in the First World War; his medical records on discharge state that his nervous system was normal, but his personnel file paints a slightly different picture. On 9 April 1918, Leith shot himself in the foot; he claimed it was an accident. The army investigated whether or not he had shot himself intentionally, but eventually ruled it accidental.⁵⁰ If he had been attempting to get himself discharged, he was unsuccessful and had to continue his service. In November 1918, Leith was granted leave to travel to the UK, and returned four days late. He was put on twenty days of field punishment number two: performing hard labour while shackled hand and foot.⁵¹ Leith's army record suggested both someone who was struggling with his role in the army, and someone whose experiences in the army would have left a permanent impact on him. The fragments of Leith's story that have survived suggest that the dispute acted as a trigger, but did not cause his mental health problems. The dispute more generally exacerbated, but did not necessarily cause, health difficulties.

During the dispute, relief committees treated health risks as a collective concern, but after it was over they became the responsibility of individual families. Towards the end of the dispute, Frank Thorby became ill with pneumonia and rheumatic fever and was hospitalised.⁵² His wife wrote to the union executive letting them know this, and saying that he would appreciate any visitors. He was still in hospital at the end of August 1951, and his wife wrote to the branch again: "Kindly note that Mr. Thorby is in the above

⁴⁸ Martin Tweed, 'Witness statement', 6 July 1951, (R18046977), ACGS-16231-J46-1951/916, Coroners Inquests – Case Files, ANZ-WO. Jack Mulheron mentioned Tweed as a generous donor to relief funds in his oral history, Jack Mulheron interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, OHC-ATL.

⁴⁹ Coroner's Inquest, 1951/916, (R2344304), AAOM-6031-W3265-181/1390/51, Wellington probate files, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁰ Arnleigh Leith, Personnel File, New Zealand Army, (R10918949), AABK-18805-W5544-0067583, Military Personnel Files, ANZ-WO.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Mrs. Thorby to Alex Drennan, [1951], 94-106-11/02, Roth Papers, ATL.

hospital ward 3 room C and would like someone to visit him.”⁵³ Far from being a collective concern, after the end of the dispute Mrs. Thorby struggled to get a comrade to visit her husband.

One of the popular beliefs about the dispute, and one that is discussed in a number of oral histories, is that it caused divorces.⁵⁴ The Society for the Protection of Women and Children made this claim in their annual report for the year ended September 1951: “The past year, particularly during periods of industrial dispute, produced an increase in the number of wives seeking the society’s assistance in the face of threatened or actual break-up of their homes.”⁵⁵ Unpacking what lay behind these claims is complex, because of the intimate and closed nature of marital relationships. Divorce registers list the occupation of the husband, and therefore provide some figures on the numbers of watersiders involved in divorce petitions.⁵⁶ In most areas, the information they provide is not relevant; in Auckland a man who described himself as a watersider in December 1951 was highly unlikely to have participated in the lockout. Wellington had 2,000 watersiders and a significant number of them returned to work on the wharves, which makes it the most useful region to examine divorce. Between 1947 and 1956, the number of divorce petitions involving watersiders, in Wellington, in any six month period ranged between one and five.⁵⁷ During this period, the most common reason for divorce was separation of three years or more, there was a gap between the dissolution of a marriage relationship and a couple getting divorced.⁵⁸

No watersider was involved in a divorce petition between 15 February and 15 July 1951.⁵⁹ In the six-month period immediately after the dispute, there were five divorce petitions where one party was a watersider.⁶⁰ The lack of divorces among watersiders during the dispute itself, and the small increase in number of divorces afterwards, does not suggest anything about these relationships. A more plausible explanation is that

⁵³ Mrs. Thorby to R. Jones, 24 August 1951, 94-106-11/04, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁵⁴ Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Ted Mulheron interview with Kerry Taylor, 1995, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, OHColl-0861, Oral History Project ATL.

⁵⁵ ‘New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children (Wellington Branch Incorporated) Annual Report and Balance Sheet year ended 30 September 1951’, p.5, MSX-3294, New Zealand Society for the Protection of Home and Family: Wellington Branch Records, ATL.

⁵⁶ Divorce Register 1950-1951, (R11495607), AAOM-6042-W3265 22, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁷ Divorce Registers 1947-1956, (R1149603-12), AAOM-6042-W3265 18-27, ANZ-WO.

⁵⁸ Brown, ‘Loosening the Marriage Bond’, pp.60-1.

⁵⁹ Divorce Register 1950-1951, (R11495607), AAOM-6042-W3265 22, ANZ-WO.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

during this time of stress and lack of money, couples did not undertake the process of getting divorced, which led to a small surge of those who did undertake the process when things got slightly easier. There is another slight increase in divorces among watersiders in 1954, which is before the divorce rate began to increase nationally.⁶¹ In 1954, those who had separated during, or immediately after the dispute would be eligible for a divorce under the separation provisions. The figures in the divorce records provide weak support for the common claim that some watersiders marriages fell apart as a result of the dispute.

Divorce is not the only measure of relationship breakdown and conflict. When asked whether he could remember stress at home during the dispute, Kevin Ford said: “Oh yes – stress – oh yes – sometimes there were some real arguments – real good arguments. We used to scarper up the bedroom and out the road.”⁶² Maureen Fairey did not know at the time what was causing conflict between her parents, but has made sense of it as an adult: “I don’t know that she [Maureen’s mother] ever forgave Dad for the waterfront lockout.”⁶³ Both interviewees’ parents remained married. The conflict around the dispute had a much bigger impact on Fairey’s parents’ relationship than Ford’s. Very few couples got divorced as a result of the dispute, and even fewer people died at their own hands. In oral histories, the extreme cases are used to communicate the costs of the dispute, but this hides the actual cost that most families had to pay. The toll of temporary ill-health and stress on relationships was far more widespread than catastrophes that ruined lives and relationships.

For many families the struggle to repay debt dragged the hardship of the dispute out for years. In 1999, Maureen Martin, the wife of a Wellington freezing-worker did an oral history interview with her grandson. Forty-eight years after the dispute had ended, Martin explained: “We never recovered from that strike as far as money goes.”⁶⁴ During the strike, they had borrowed money from Martin’s mother-in-law, which they had to pay back afterwards. They were a young couple in 1951, and had just had their second child. Strike debt permanently affected that family’s economic life.

⁶¹ Divorce Register 1953-1955, (R11495609-10), AAOM-6042-W3265 24-26, ANZ-WO.

⁶² Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶³ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁴ Maureen Martin interview with Liam Martin, September 1999, Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, OHC-ATL.

Not everyone could repay their debt, and unpaid debt could threaten a family's home. Hire purchase companies could and did repossess furniture.⁶⁵ Mortgage and rent debt was even more hazardous. Jimmy Hewitt lost a deposit on a house during the dispute, and those who were unable to pay their mortgage could lose their home entirely.⁶⁶ Mr R. Cecil had been an Auckland watersider and he was served eviction papers in July 1953. He had been behind on his rent since the dispute, and had had another period of unemployment when his wife died and he had to care for his children.⁶⁷ He was still in debt and fighting eviction two years after the dispute ended. Debt, particularly housing debt, threatened a family's wellbeing, and any other tragedies or difficulties pushed families closer to the edge.

Debt had a social meaning and a social cost, as well as an economic impact and an economic cost. Tom Gregory emphasised in his oral history interview that his family did not go into debt and got nothing 'on tick'.⁶⁸ Their landlady, a widow whose husband had been a watersider, did not ask them for rent during the dispute, but said 'pay me when you can'. Tom Gregory did not classify this as debt.⁶⁹ Johnny Mitchell emphasised that his family always paid their debts. In his oral history, taken over more than decade in the 1970s and 1980s, Mitchell explained his family's credit as follows:

[The grocer] gave us credit right through, and he always bragged that it was the Mitchell family who always paid their bill at the end of the dispute, some of them didn't, but Lorna paid up every penny that he gave us credit for.

[Interviewer: it's essential that a man can hold his head up high for everything.]

Yes, Lorna was that kind of person.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ H. J. Hansen to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/03, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁶⁶ Jimmy Hewitt interview with Gerry Evans, 1 February 2000, copy in author's possession.

⁶⁷ Hon. Secretary to Mr J. S. Reynolds esq., 6 August 1953, Box 2, Folder 1, 89/203, Johnny Mitchell Papers, Auckland Museum.

⁶⁸ Thomas and Pat Gregory interview with Grace Millar, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ John James Mitchell, interview with Douglas Crosado, Ray Grover and Bert Roth, 1977-1988, OHInt-0219/1, OHC-ATL.

When explaining the impact of the debt on her mother, Maureen Fairey said: “And my mother was a very proud woman, it would have really made her very angry.”⁷¹ As well as the economic cost discussed earlier in the chapter, debt could weigh heavily on people’s sense of self.

Debt, and the repayment of debt, featured more strongly in women’s accounts of the dispute than men’s. Annie Gracie stated that she owed £13 to her sister at the end of the dispute.⁷² No men were that specific about debt in their oral histories, which suggests that women tended to be more responsible for repaying debt. Johnny Mitchell did not accept the credit the interviewer gives him for repaying debt and instead emphasised his wife’s role.⁷³ This would fit with the division of financial responsibility that was most common in working-class families at that time.

Gratitude and obligation continued to shape relationships for many years where credit had been extended and accepted. There is little record of the effect this had on kin relationships, but oral history narrators are more willing to talk about the effect it had on what was theoretically a purely economic relationship – the one between grocer and customer. In 2011, David Dick, the son of a locked-out watersider in Port Chalmers, mentioned the importance of using local shops sixty years after the dispute, because they had extended credit.⁷⁴ Kevin Ford, whose father was a watersider in Bluff, took his debt to the grocers very seriously:

I do know once when the watersiders started their own sort of grocery shop up on the wharf in Bluff that had cheap groceries and I brought a bagful home for Mum and Mum was delighted of course she said ‘oh that’s good.’ And Dad came home early one day and said ‘oh the grocer’s been early this week have they?’ They usually came on Monday take an order and deliver on Thursday or Friday or whatever day it was. And Mum said no Kevin got these from the grocery store on the wharf. They’re a lot cheaper than Charlie Denny – that was our grocer – and Dad took one look at me one look at my mother, picked them up and he said come follow me. I followed them out and he threw them in the rubbish bin and he said that if

⁷¹ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷² Annie Gracie interview with Jamie Mackay, 3 April 1992, OHInt-0020/14, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, OHC-ATL.

⁷³ John James Mitchell, interview with Douglas Crosado, Ray Grover and Bert Roth, 1977-1988, OHInt-0219/1, OHC-ATL.

⁷⁴ David Dick interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

I bring anything home like that again I'll be put in the rubbish bin and I'll be out the gate. He said 'the grocer carried me for three months and half them bastards down there and they started a store up against him'. He wasn't a very happy chappy.⁷⁵

This incident happened in the 1960s; the loyalty some watersiders had towards grocers demonstrated the importance they placed on having been given credit.

Most families who borrowed during the dispute eventually paid that money back; the time when they were finally free of the financial burden has left little record. Twelve debtors have a payment marked 'final payment' in the Seamen's Union receipt book. The first seaman to repay his debt in full to the Seamen's Union was J. Devitt; he made three payments totalling £14/12/0, and paid off the last of his debt in October 1952. The amount Devitt repaid was the equivalent to two or three weeks wages.⁷⁶ Five other seamen repaid their debt in total in 1952 paying between £3 and £15 each. The next final payment occurred in 1955 and five more followed; three people made their last payment in the 1960s. J. Stevens was the last to repay his debt in these records, in April 1964.⁷⁷ Seamen were not representative of other workers involved in the dispute, as their debt was to the union and they were paid wages on leaving a ship, rather than weekly. However, these differences made seamen more able and motivated to pay off debt, not less. J. Stevens was almost certainly not the only person repaying debt accumulated during the dispute into the 1960s.

Few adults, even those who go into detail about what they owed, talk about the process of repaying debt, or how long it took and the only other source of information is children's accounts. Two men who were boys during the dispute tell very similar stories of a time when the debt was paid off. Kevin Ford said: "Things started to pick up a bit. That's when we started to go to the movies – I know that – we never went to the movies while... for years. Then all of a sudden we were going the movies."⁷⁸ William

⁷⁵ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁷⁶ New Zealand Seamen Award, 16 December 1950, *New Zealand Awards Agreements & c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Apprentices Act and the Labour Disputes Investigation Act*, 1950, Vol.50, p.3651.

⁷⁷ Auckland Seamen's Strike Committee - Financial records, 80-307-22/03, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, ATL.

⁷⁸ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

Dougherty also talked about only being able to go to movies when he was older.⁷⁹ Their stories stand as acknowledgement that the point where debt was paid off existed, and mattered for a family.

As families paid off debt, and wages increased during the 1950s, families involved in the dispute managed to find a small measure of prosperity. Vera Dougherty lived with her brother and nephew, both of whom were locked out from the Port Chalmers waterfront; she ran the household. In the late 1950s and 1960s, when the family could afford it, she had a set menu for each day of the week, and decades later, her great-nephew and his wife could almost entirely reconstruct a week's menu. On Saturday the Dougherty family had stew, on Sunday roast dinner, on Tuesday curried sausages, on Wednesday tripe and onions, and on Friday fish, and on one of the remaining week days chops. In the 1940s and early 1950s, this menu had not been possible; William Dougherty: "I remember having dripping on bread, no butter."⁸⁰ For Vera, the prosperity meant that she was able to buy and cook the menu of her choice every week. Eventually, families who had been involved in the dispute were able to have some measure of the material comfort that they had been fighting for.

After debt had been paid back, and families became habituated to the changes they had faced in the aftermath of the dispute; all that was left of the dispute were loyalty cards and people's memories. How did the family members of watersiders and striking workers remember and make meaning of these events? In her work on the 1926 Miners lockout in Durham, Hester Barron argued that the memory of that event had been cultivated and deployed within the mining community.⁸¹ Barron argued that while collective union memory was important it was not the largest factor in determining people's narratives of the dispute: "Despite such a coherent communal narrative, the most striking impression gained from the various written and oral memoirs of those involved is of their variety."⁸² She demonstrated that while most of her interviewees had internalised the collective narrative that mining unions had built in Durham, making sense of the lockout within their own autobiography was just as important in the way people told their stories. Her analysis of the relationship between individual memories

⁷⁹ William Dougherty interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 waterfront dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ Barron, *The 1926 Miners' Lockout*, pp.228-32.

⁸² *ibid.*, p.232.

and collective union memories is useful for analysing memories of 1951. Gwendolene Pawson described some very specific aspects of a fight with the children of strikebreakers, at her school:

I remember one particular time, we were having a fight just down the road – we’d come out of school – we’d probably had a fight at school and we’d come out and had a fight on the road, because the nuns wouldn’t put up with it. Anyway we all had a big fight, anyway one of my sisters had bought me a wooden pencil case it was a double one and you could slide it across – anyway somebody upset me and I hit them with – I just got this for my birthday – and I hit them with it and I broke it – and I remember I was crying because it was the only birthday present I got from one of my sisters – yeah – broke the blinking good pencil case.⁸³

Pawson was telling a story about fighting with the children of strikebreakers, something that would fit well with union narratives of 1951, but her most vivid memory was of the pencil case – and the relationships that were associated with the pencil case.

Hester Barron’s discussion provides an important starting point to understanding oral history memories of 1951, but there are key differences in the way memories were made in the two disputes. First, children of watersiders did not necessarily have access to collective union memories about the 1951 waterfront dispute. Children who lived through 1926 and grew up in Durham were surrounded by a mining community that kept the memory of 1926 alive. In 1951, some geographical areas, such as Port Chalmers and Huntly, were unified enough to create a collective union memory, but most watersiders were more scattered. Children who lived through 1951, but whose fathers no longer worked alongside their locked-out or striking comrades, often have no familiarity with the collective memories that unionists have built up about the dispute.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Kevin Ford, William Dougherty, David Dick and Robert Hannah’s fathers all returned to work on the waterfront after the dispute, and they followed in their father’s footsteps, and therefore were familiar with union accounts of 1951.⁸⁵

⁸³ Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁴ For example: Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010; Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012; Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁵ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011; William Dougherty interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011; Robert Hannah interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, David Dick interview with Grace Millar, 11 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

Kevin Ford could clearly remember what his father told him about the dispute: “The grocer’s shop – I know he told me this once – that it took him three years to pay his grocery bill off.”⁸⁶ Ford’s father returned to work in Bluff, and Ford himself became a watersider in Timaru. For Kevin Ford’s father, remembering the dispute was part of passing on union culture and family history to his son. Children accessed, or did not access, collective memories and meanings of the dispute through their families.

Children acted as active participants in creating their memories, choosing whose memories and meanings they would accept. Maureen Fairey had a very clear description of her parents’ different accounts of the lockout:

I can’t actually remember very much about that period of time, but I can only remember what my mother told me afterwards.

Interviewer: What did she tell you? What were her stories?

Well she told me that at the end of the six months or so she said we had absolutely nothing and we were in debt by then. She said that she didn’t – I remember her saying that she didn’t have a singlet that wasn’t full of holes – or clothing. I can remember her saying that people dropped food off at the door. [...]

And I can also remember my father talking about scabs and bloody scabs and so forth all his life he spoke like that about people who did go back and work on the waterfront.⁸⁷

Condemning strikebreakers was a central part of union collective memories of the dispute, and Maureen Fairey’s father centred them in his narrative. Maureen Fairey did not accept her father’s interpretation, and instead used her oral history to tell her mother’s story, which was centred on the deprivation that the family experienced in the home. Gwendolene Pawson also dismissed her father’s memory of the dispute: “but my father always used to nag and go on, yeah.”⁸⁸ Gwendolene Pawson described remembering the dispute with her sister, who had to un-invite a neighbour from her wedding because he worked as a strikebreaker: “that sister that I told you was getting married – she’s been dead six years now – but over the years her and I’d say – she’d say

⁸⁶ Kevin Ford interview with Grace Millar, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁷ Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁸⁸ Gwendolene Pawson interview with Grace Millar, 6 January 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

oh it was embarrassing Gwen – oh it was embarrassing I had to go up and tell Mr and Mrs Glennis that they couldn't come to the wedding – gosh that was embarrassing.”⁸⁹ The family was one of the places where people made collective memories about the dispute. Asking interviewees about how they talked about the dispute within the family can give access to some of the processes by which people made memories and meanings of the dispute. In turn, this shows that there is plenty of room for people's agency when studying collective memory. Remembering is after all an active process, and oral history interviewees can tell us who they talked about the dispute with, which reveals some of the ways that memories were formed.

For some, the memory that they carried of the dispute continued to take its toll decades after the dispute was over. People who had not been part of any collective memory-making struggled with painful memories of the dispute. A woman who was 15 in 1951, recorded her interview under the pseudonym Jennifer Cameron, because she still felt the stigma of being a wharfie's child. Before doing her oral history she wrote down her memories and started:

Remembering something that happened 61 years ago is not easy. Two years ago I visited Ports of Auckland with a group of women. We were observing the work being done at the Port. The woman I was sitting with said in a sneering way, “Wharfies have always been trouble makers” or words to that effect. Suddenly, my blood ran cold and I felt as though a bucket of cold water had been poured over me. What a memory! I clammed up and could say nothing.⁹⁰

During her oral history, she often struggled to hold back tears when discussing her feelings of stigma and relationships with her family.⁹¹ Graham McCready, who was only six and half in 1951, was also deeply affected by his past, and feelings of exclusion. In his oral history interview, he said: “That waterfront dispute has had a radical impact on my life.”⁹² He then told a story from 1984, when he was living in Canada, and ran in a by-election hundreds of miles from where he lived, to challenge a corrupt politician that no-one else was running against:

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym], 'Memoir' 22 April 2012, author's possession.

⁹¹ Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

⁹² Graham McCready interview with Grace Millar, 26 September 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project.

And after the – and I pursued this guy vigorously – you know – because it really was an abuse of office and abuse of power – which in my view of course was what the waterfront dispute was [...] And a newspaper reporter asked me ‘why – I’ve never seen someone go after a politician like this’ and I broke down in tears and I told him about the waterfront dispute and about being at Thorndon primary school about being separated from people.⁹³

Some children had no opportunity to create collective meaning from their memories of the dispute and the memories they held were incredibly painful.

As well as detailing the aftermath of the 1951 waterfront lockout and supporting strikes, this chapter is making a broader claim about the place of an industrial dispute’s social costs in its history. Labour historians have often marginalised the aftermath of industrial disputes. In doing so, they have implicitly accepted that the consequences were the concerns of individuals and families, not history. Prolonged lockouts and strikes have an impact on people and communities that last long after all the workers have returned to work and the history of industrial disputes should reflect that.

This chapter has discussed the struggle to repay debt, the impact on people’s health and stress on relationships in separate sections. This is not to suggest that these factors affected people’s lives discretely. Arnleigh Leith listed his debts in his last will and testament before committing suicide. Debt was a key cause of conflict between Maureen Fairey’s parents. Mr. Cecil was threatened with eviction not just because he was behind on rent during the dispute, but because subsequently his wife died, which put further strain on the family. Debt affected people’s relationships; illness affected debt. Illness, debt and relationship disagreements all caused stress, and stress, in turn had an impact on people’s relationships and wellbeing.

The 1951 waterfront lockout and supporting strikes cast a long shadow for families involved. July 1951 was not really an ending, but the start of a new phase, as families who had survived on credit had to begin paying for the lockout. For a few families, the stress of the dispute tipped over to catastrophe, but far more faced lower-level stress in their relationships or from temporary ill-health. During the 151 days watersiders were locked out, the costs of the dispute were a collective responsibility, but at the end of the

⁹³ *ibid.*

dispute, responsibilities that had been collective reverted to individual families. Relief organisations continued to exist for a few weeks, but then families' survival, their health, and their relationships were pushed back behind closed doors.

Conclusion

Studying families has revealed a messier and less contained 1951 waterfront dispute than previous accounts. This study has explored the role of workers' homes in the dispute. From there it has shown the importance of a wide range of places, such as a Labour MP's garage filled with vegetables in Taihape or a Plunket meeting where women told their friends to tell their husbands not to go back to work. This thesis has also drawn attention to actors that are marginalised in other accounts, including family members, locked-out and striking workers who were not in leadership positions, and those who donated funds. This conclusion will discuss what studying these spaces and people tells us about the 1951 waterfront dispute, and it will also explore what studying families and the 1951 waterfront dispute can tell us about the society the events took place in.

Workers' homes were sites of the 1951 waterfront dispute. The core role of homes and families during the dispute was to bear its material costs. This thesis has explored how families managed for five months without the wages of locked-out and striking workers. When the lockout began in mid-February, no two families were in the same economic position and the resources they could draw upon were different. Those who knew how to hunt hunted. Those who had children over the school-leaving age who were still in school found them paid work. Those who could obtain coal did so. It was within their homes that women and men made decisions about how to cope: who was going to undertake paid work? What could be done without? The dispute changed the pattern of unpaid work that was already taking place within a home, as well as paid work that took people out of it. Few families could manage for five months through union relief, donations, extra paid work, and acquiring goods outside the cash economy; they had to turn to debt and deprivation. Many families survived by not paying their bills, and by borrowing money; credit from grocers, landlords and hire purchase companies were crucial to people's ability to survive without wages. Finally families survived by doing without, which meant cold, wet feet and hunger. The short and long term consequences of not having wages were borne in workers' homes.

Just as homes and families bore the material cost of the dispute, they were also the sites of its crisis. The stress of an industrial dispute was different from other hardships families might have endured, such as unemployment or injury. Workers could always choose to withdraw

from the dispute and return to work. Most families bore the cost of the dispute, but some workers withdrew from the dispute by working as strikebreakers, or taking other work. When workers made decisions to withdraw or continue the dispute, their decisions were not just about the increasing cost – as after months without wages all families faced heavy costs. As the dispute went on it became clear to many workers that they were not going to win, and in some ports there was a real threat that they would not be able to work on the wharf again. The costs of the dispute became intolerable for some workers and their families when they realised that not only were they not going to win, but they may lose their jobs. In Port Chalmers, strikebreakers threatened to start a new union and the branch returned to work; in Auckland, when the new union closed its ranks many branch members found other work. Homes and families were the site of the costs of the dispute and therefore where important discussions about loyalty and what was at risk took place.

During the dispute, union relief committees collectivised some work that normally took place in workers' homes. Providing food parcels as relief removed the responsibility (and autonomy) of shopping from individual women. By organising relief, union branches were taking an interest in the family economy that they had not previously. At the end of the dispute the responsibility the union had taken for domestic concerns was reversed, and the cost of repaying the dispute was treated as the domestic concern of individual families. Many families had managed by going into debt and they only began to pay for the dispute after it ended. For them, July 1951 did not mark an ending, but just a new phase. Union branches temporarily treated the family economy as a collective concern, but that only lasted until July 1951, then the costs became individual families' responsibility.

The introduction to this thesis outlined the ways that women's experiences have been explored and marginalised in the history of industrial disputes. Some women were very politically active in the 1951 waterfront dispute. While union meetings, the Auckland Central relief depot and other spaces were gender segregated, the use of homes as union work spaces gave some women opportunities to participate in relief work and the creation and distribution of propaganda. There were also formal opportunities for women's political participation. The women's auxiliaries in Auckland, Wellington and Lyttelton organised meetings and activities for women. Both the women's auxiliaries and union branches organised events where selected women spoke. Women from the Auckland women's auxiliary even toured Australia, where they spoke to the unions that had donated money.

Lully Watene, one of the women who went to Australia, travelled with her father, Steve Watene and attended union meetings that were otherwise male only. However, to focus on her experiences, and the work of other women who were as involved in the public events of the dispute as she was, provides a very limited picture of women's participation in the dispute. Lully Watene's mother did not participate in the public or political events during the dispute. She was, however, deeply involved. Two adults and eight children were living in their house, and she had had to ensure people were fed and manage the bills. Her work enabled her husband and her daughter to take the more public roles that they did. One of the foundation arguments of this thesis is that Mrs Watene's work was as important as that of her other family members. This thesis has explored women's work of managing during the dispute, which had previously only been discussed as "being marvellous". This has revealed the different sorts of work women had to do in order to manage without wages. Women's domestic skills, such as careful budgeting and cooking in a way that made food go further were vital. So were women's roles in creating and building relationships and in the distribution of food and money to families through kin and neighbourhood networks.

Studying families has also revealed aspects of men's participation in the 1951 waterfront dispute, particularly men who did not take prominent roles. During the dispute, men's days were structured by union meetings. Some men went from these meetings to a full day's union work, but many others faced far more free-time than they were used to. This underscores how not working changed men's lives, and how bored many men felt without the work that had structured their days. While evidence about what men did with this extra time is hard to uncover, the accounts that have survived showed men at a loose end, and emphasised how important paid work was to men.

The history of gender segregation in the workforce has meant that in most disputes either men or women make up the bulk of the striking workforce. Historians have generally followed this gender segregation when they write about industrial disputes, focusing on men or women, femininity or masculinity, but not both. The 1951 waterfront dispute, like waterfront work, was gender segregated, but to study it in a gender-segregated way ignores the connections between men and women. This thesis has shown how segregated political spaces during the dispute were created in reference to each other. The Auckland relief committee had to actively exclude women to create male-only spaces. Men had some freedom in how they concerned themselves with the family economy, because that was

women's work. The reverse was also true, women did not have the freedom to disengage with the family economy. This thesis has built on the recent work of Sue Bruley to demonstrate that studying gender relationships during industrial disputes is more revealing than segregated studies of gender, which examine either women or men.

Unlike their parents, children did not have a specific role to play in the dispute, which happened around and to them. Children were symbols: food was collected on their behalf, and the regulations were condemned for depriving them. To the relief committee, children were an answer to the questions about how much an individual watersider needed, and how desperate his circumstances were. Despite the importance of this symbolic role, in oral histories and in photos there is often a distance between children's experiences and adults' experiences. Most children who have been interviewed about the dispute describe some sort of confusion or distance from their parents. Children's experiences of the dispute happened in different spaces from their parents, and often parents were not fully aware of the way children were either being targeted, or fighting as partisans, at school.

Studying families has opened the 1951 waterfront dispute outwards. It has emphasised the importance of all those who donated both to the union funds, and to individual families, and the role that existing relationships played in gathering those funds. Families received gifts from kin, neighbours, and church groups because of pre-existing networks of relationships. Family members' networks were also important in persuading men not to work as strikebreakers. Informal conversations dissuaded those who were thinking of returning from doing so. While the dispute took place within homes and families it did not stop there, but expanded outwards through family members' relationship networks.

By studying working-class families in a time of difficulty, this thesis has also added to the wider knowledge of 1950s New Zealand. The 1951 waterfront dispute complicates the image of post-war New Zealand as a society of prosperity and conformity. Working-class families, even the supposedly high-earning watersiders and miners, continued to live in austerity in the immediate post-war period. Waterside workers saw the beginning of prosperity – they unloaded the consumer goods that were starting to arrive in New Zealand. The NZWWU made substantial wage claims in 1949 and 1950, which eventually led to the waterfront lockout; the union was demanding that workers have a share of the increased prosperity in the post-war period. The Holland government's victory ensured that the distribution of the

post-war boom would not be on workers' terms. Instead, those who had demanded more faced years of further economic deprivation as they paid back their debt from the dispute.

Prosperity and conformity are twin images in New Zealand history of the 1950s. The Holland government's success in the 1951 election, after it had severely limited civil liberties, has been used to paint a picture of a punitively conformist society, where the general population ignored or supported the government's targeting of watersiders. Examining how people responded to Regulation 8 paints a more complicated picture. People and businesses donated tens of thousands of pounds to the relief committee as well as fruit, fish, vegetables and sheep. On top of this, individual families received support from kin, neighbours, friends, churches, and strangers. These donations were illegal, or understood to be illegal. A large number and broad range of people proved themselves willing to break the law to give money to a union that was being strongly criticised in the press and by the government. To the extent that 1950s New Zealand was a narrow and conformist society, it was also one where many people prioritised supporting families that did not have an income over following the law.

Close examination of the Emergency Regulations also paints a more complicated picture of the state's role in the dispute. The police enforced Regulation 8 very lightly, with no arrests and few searches. As previous historians have pointed out, the police did not rigorously enforce any of the regulations. In addition, Holland's government maintained welfare provisions to watersiders' families, during the dispute. The State Advances Corporation provided credit to many watersiders living in state housing; women whose husbands were locked-out or on strike continued to receive the family benefit, and eventually workers involved in the dispute who claimed a sickness benefit received an emergency benefit. There are two important points to take from the limited and somewhat contradictory repression of Holland's government in 1951. The first is that despite giving itself extraordinary powers, the Holland government neither wanted nor needed to exercise the full power of the state to smash the NZWWU. Perhaps they were concerned that more total repression might have created more resistance. There was some backlash to the Emergency Regulations; watersiders described receiving money from people who did not support the NZWWU, but opposed the regulations. The second point is that the Holland government could have cut off welfare state provisions to watersiders' families and they did not. They even granted emergency payments to sick and injured workers who were not eligible for benefits, because they

worked in industries that were involved in the dispute. The Holland government continued to treat locked-out and striking workers as citizens of the welfare state, despite the Emergency Regulations. While MPs were willing to defend the idea that it was illegal to give food to watersiders' wives, the government was not willing to evict, or be seen to evict, families from state housing. This decision reflects how deeply embedded and widely valued the provisions of the welfare state had become. More than that, Holland's government was the first right-wing government since the expansion of the welfare state in the 1930s. Their decision to continue welfare provisions to watersiders' families cemented the welfare state into the post-war political consensus.

This thesis has confirmed and deepened our understanding of working-class family relationships in 1950s New Zealand. A lot of historical work about families in this period is based on sources that discuss ideal families, from either the media or the state, and the 1951 waterfront dispute showed how families operated in circumstances that were very far from ideal. Most of the survival strategies used by families had some basis in existing practices. As has already been discussed, women's skills were vital for surviving on less. The donations families received during the dispute were grounded in ideas about who could give and who could receive aid. Women remember far more about gifts between kin than men do, which suggests that they were more actively involved in maintaining those networks. The way people describe receiving gifts from neighbours and emphasise that the neighbours did not come into the house, suggests that there were important limits on this relationship in working-class communities.

Families and homes were very flexible in this time of crisis. Ida Thompson and her children enjoyed having two men and a Gestetner in their living room, just as the Watene family managed having their home function as a food depot. Many women who had not been doing paid work, found paid work and some men took up unpaid work that was usually done by their wives. Gender roles within families appear to have been elastic in times of difficulty; they stretched significantly during the dispute, but returned to what had been normal afterwards. Although a few women did continue paid work, there is no evidence that their husbands continued unpaid work. This temporary flexibility around gender roles and the organisation of families, allowed the underlying structure of the family to continue in times of crisis.

Flexibility within families allowed a simulacrum of the breadwinner wage to be upheld, even when the structure of the family economy was very different. Relief committees organised relief to mimic the breadwinner wage; a locked-out worker decided whether or not their family needed relief, and brought that relief home. This allowed men to play the same mediation role with their family during the dispute as they had had before. When men were working on the waterfront the hours of work influenced, but did not dictate, when men could be home, and the wage packet provided a maximum, but not a minimum, amount that a man could pass on to his family. Likewise, during the dispute, men had control over the hours they spent at home and what they did with the resources they received. Being a breadwinner gave men power within their families, and that continued during the dispute, even when they were no longer bringing home wages.

The actions of the relief committees also provide an unusual view of welfare at the time. Recent historical work has emphasised the importance of non-state welfare in a welfare state society. Relief committees were run by working-class men for working-class men, and are therefore most revealing about their attitude towards welfare and charity. Relief committees organised aid very differently from standard welfare practice of the time, and attempted to differentiate themselves from welfare. Despite this, some men were still reluctant to accept even union relief. This underscores the extent to which applying for welfare was women's work. The best sources for welfare history are often the archives of welfare organisations; a sideways glimpse of how these organisations were viewed by working-class men provides an interesting contrast.

Within families, awareness of the 1951 waterfront dispute as a class conflict can mainly be seen in the way that 'scabs' were treated. There was a widespread acceptance within working-class families that 'scabs' should be condemned. Women played important roles in maintaining community condemnation of 'scabs', children remember it shaping their relationships with other children from a very early age. The class nature of this view of 'scabs' can be seen by how foreign it was to the Auckland religious minister who worked on the wharf and was surprised that union members saw him as 'scab'. However, there are also areas of discord in the way family members understood the dispute. While the view of 'scabs' was widely accepted, the union's view that taking other work was tantamount to 'scabbing' was not, and was a point of conflict within families.

The 1951 waterfront dispute was actively remembered by those who were interested in using it to maintain a culture of working-class resistance, and was still being remembered in this way at the time of writing this thesis. This fits with Hester Barron's work on the 1926 British miners' lockout, another industrial dispute that was remembered by unionists in order to build union culture and prepare for future disputes. The difference between 1951 and Hester Barron's work about 1926 is the limited reach of union memories about 1951. The geographical unity of the community Barron was studying meant that, at least in Durham, the union memory of the 1926 lockout was also a community memory. In 1951, children involved in the dispute that lived in larger cities, might only hear about the dispute from their parents, and not have any connection with union discourses about it. There is some evidence that geographically homogenous communities, such as Port Chalmers and Huntly, developed specific narratives about the dispute. Oral historians have looked at the way that narrators use existing discourses about the past when they are telling their oral histories. In oral histories of 1951, there is evidence of discourses about the past affecting the stories people tell, but the discourses are multiple and diffuse.

When interviewing people who had been children at the time, I asked them if they had talked about the dispute with their families. There were three main responses. For some children, 1951 was discussed within their families and had become part of their worldview as adults. A right-wing National Government was in office when these interviews were conducted, and these interviewees made connections between current events, recent history, and what they had experienced as children. Another group of interviewees recalled their fathers talking about the dispute, but rejected these narratives, and instead talked of building memories with their female relatives. Finally some children had not talked about the dispute with their families, and for them it remained a painful subject to this day. Children who had found a wider framework to make sense of their experiences could describe the creation of that framework. Oral history informants have had agency in the way that they have remembered the past and can tell us about how they constructed their memories, if they are asked.

As well as exploring the history of the 1951 waterfront dispute, and the society that it took place in, this thesis contributes to the broad historiography of strikes and lockouts. It has placed the material survival of families at its centre, illuminating aspects of industrial disputes that are often marginalised, such as donations, debt, relief and the experiences of children and of women and men who did not take activist roles. Looking at debt, for example, is not

new; historians and other academics have noted the importance of debt during industrial disputes in many different contexts. Instead, this thesis's contribution is that it explicitly argues that knowing a dispute is funded through debt should extend its chronology. This thesis is a historiographical argument by example, demonstrating further ways that historians could explore strikes and lock-outs and it opens up many questions for further study. Existing historical accounts make it clear that the way union relief is organised differs between disputes, but it is not clear why, and what effect these differences have. In some instances taking outside work is a respectable survival strategy, while in others it is deeply condemned; again it is impossible to trace why and how, as the topic has previously received so little historical attention. These questions have not been marginalised by accident, but because the association of the family economy with the home has put them outside of history. By examining the 1951 waterfront lockout and support strikes, this thesis has argued that domestic economies, the women who manage them, and the homes they are managed in, are integral to the history of industrial disputes.

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Appendix I: Participant Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Questions for Oral History Interviews

Participant Information Sheet: Families in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project

Researcher: Grace Millar, School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

I am a History PhD student at Victoria University of Wellington. My thesis examines families and the 1951 waterfront dispute. As part of my research for this thesis I am undertaking an oral history project with members of families that were involved in the 1951 waterfront dispute. This research project has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

I am inviting people who were part of a family where one member was locked-out in 1951 to take part in my oral history project. This will involve a recorded interview where I ask you questions about your family and the dispute. I can do the oral history in your home, or anywhere that you feel comfortable. I will come with the equipment needed. Before we begin the interview I will ask you to fill in an information form, with contact details and biographical information. During the interview you can stop the recording at any time, either for a break or to end the interview, and you do not have to answer any of the questions that I ask. I will provide you with a copy of the interview on CD afterwards, if you would like one. You can withdraw from this project up to a month after your oral history has been completed, and your tapes will be destroyed. You do not need to give an explanation or reason if you decide to withdraw.

The interview will form part of the research for my thesis and quotations and references from oral histories will appear in my thesis. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations and deposited in the University Library. If you are interested I can send you a summary of my research when it is finished. As well as my thesis I intend to try to publish the research in other forums, such as conference papers and articles in scholarly journals. If I use material from your oral history I will use your name, so you will be identifiable to those who read it.

At present the interviewer holds the copyright of an oral history interview as its creator. However, since I am recording your story, I am happy to share the copyright with you. We indicate what arrangements we have agreed for copyright on the recording agreement. If you wish to share copyright I ask that you sign a release form granting your permission for me to use this material.

When I have finished my PhD thesis, the oral history will then be deposited in the Alexander Turnbull Library. In the interviews and material related to this project you will be identified by your name. You will be able to choose what sort of access people will have to your oral history. You can require that people get your permission before they listen to the oral history, or you can set restrictions on any publication from the oral history.

Thank you so much for your interest in my research. If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at 04-463-6758, grace.millar@vuw.ac.nz.

Grace Millar

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Families in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this project up to a month after my oral history has been completed, and the tapes will be destroyed, without having to give reasons or without penalty of any sort.

I agree to take part in this research.

Signed:

Name of participant
(Please print clearly)

Date:

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING AGREEMENT FORM

NAME OF PROJECT: Families in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project

FULL NAME OF
PERSON INTERVIEWED:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

INTERVIEWER: Grace Millar

COPYRIGHT HOLDER:

1. PLACEMENT: I, the person interviewed, agree that the recording of my interview and accompanying material, prepared for archival purposes, will be held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Oral History Centre, Wellington

2. ACCESS: I agree that the recording of my interview and accompanying material may be made available for research, at the above location or at a location approved by the commissioning organisation/person, **subject to any restrictions in Section 4.**

3. PUBLICATION: I agree that the recording of my interview and accompanying material, may be quoted or shown in full or in part in published work, broadcast, or used in public performances, **subject to any restrictions in Section 4.**

4. RESTRICTED RECORDING AND ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL:

I require that there be **no access to** ☐ (cross where
I require that there be **no publication of** ☐ appropriate)
this recording and accompanying material **without my prior written permission.**

NOTES: REVIEW/RELEASE

DATE:.....

5. PRIVACY ACT: I understand that this Agreement Form does not affect my rights and responsibilities under the Privacy Act 1993.

6. COMMENTS:

PERSON INTERVIEWED:
(sign here)

Date:

INTERVIEWER:
(sign here)

Date:

Questions for members of families involved in the 1951 waterfront dispute:

Note: These questions are a guide only, and I would expect the exact questions asked and the order to vary depending on the interview. The bullet points are reminders to myself of aspects of this question that I might be interested in, or ideas that might trigger further memories.

Part 1

Tell me about your parents?

Who else was in your family ?

- Number of brothers and sisters
- Age gaps
- Who else was considered family
- Who else lived in the household

Where did you live when you were growing up?

- Location
- Housing situation
- Details about the house

What do you remember of your father's work?

- Paid work
- Impact of work on interviewees life
- Work at home

What do you remember about your mother's work?

- Paid work
- Other money making activities
- Work at home

What do you remember about money in your family?

- Pocket money
- Bank account, Post Office Savings account, cash
- Money management
- Decisions about money
- Who contributed money to the family economy

What do you remember about food in your family?

- Garden etc.
- Buying food
- Regular meals

What do you remember about clothes in your family?

- Bought, made, hand-medowns
- School uniforms

What happened when someone in your family got sick?

- Doctor – getting to the doctor
- Medicine
- Chronic illness
- Dentist

What work did you do around the house?

- Brothers and sisters

What did your family do for treats?

How did you celebrate special occasions in your family?

Did your family go to church?

- Denomination
- Location
- Who went to what

Did your family belong to any community groups?

- Sporting groups

What did you know about unions?

- Social events

What were your family members doing in 1950?

- Who was living at home
- What were they doing
- Any other key life events that were occurring

Part 2 (in this part I will refer back specifically to answers in the first part to find out if things changed)

When did you first find out about the 1951 waterfront dispute?

What are your memories of the 1951 waterfront dispute? (eliciting answers to the questions that follow if they follow organically)

What do you know about what your family did for food during the 1951 dispute?

What do you know about what your family did for clothes during the 1951 dispute?

What do you know about what your family did to get money during the 1951 dispute?

- Debt
- Family benefit

Do you remember going without anything during the dispute?

- Treats and special occasions

Do you remember making anything that you would have usually bought during the dispute?

Did anyone in your family get sick during the dispute?

Do you remember going along to any activities organised by the union during the dispute?

Do you remember any discussions within your family about the dispute, and whether it was the right thing to do?

How did people outside the family talk to you about the dispute?

- School
- Community groups
- Church
- Anyone else that they've mentioned in the first half

It must have been really stressful for your parents, do you remember any times when you noticed their stress?

What do you remember about the dispute ending?

What do you know about the financial impact the dispute had on your family?

What do you know about what happened at the end of the dispute for your family?

How were things different for your family when the dispute was over?

Did you talk about the dispute with your family?

When did you leave school?

When did you leave home?

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