

‘As A Scab’: Rank and File Workers, Strikebreakers, and the End of the 1951 Waterfront Lock-Out

On 9 July 1951, the unions involved in the waterfront lock-out and the lock-out’s 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, an assumption that historians have not challenged. This article presents a different view of the end of the dispute, and explores the assessments that workers made about continuing the dispute, to demonstrate that they did not blindly followed those in leadership positions. Strikebreakers were central to the decisions workers made to continue the dispute; outside strikebreakers presented a risk to existing workers job – and the threat of never working on the wharf again made the costs of the dispute untenable for many. Despite their importance, strikebreakers have been under-researched, and this article suggests new ways of understanding the decisions made both by strikebreakers and by those who remained on strike or locked-out until 9 July. To understand the end of the 1951 waterfront dispute, it is not enough to examine the actions of union and political leaders like Jock Barnes, President of the New Zealand Waterfront Workers Union, and Prime Minister Sidney Holland.

Most historical accounts of the 1951 waterfront lock-out and supporting strikes have focused on the leaders rather than the rank and file, and the origins of the dispute, rather than its conclusion. In *Confrontation ’51*, Michael Bassett argued that the dispute was driven by political power and the leaders’ personalities.² Although Bassett’s view has been challenged, his ideas have been treated as the orthodox view of the dispute, particularly in general histories of New Zealand.³ Bassett’s focus on leadership has been replicated in projects that

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. In this article, lock-out and supporting strikes or dispute are used to refer to the entire industrial conflict, and lock-out to describe the events on the waterfront.

² Michael Bassett, *Confrontation ’51: The 1951 Waterfront Dispute*, Wellington, 1972.

³ Robert Chapman, ‘From Labour to National’, in W. H. Oliver ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Oxford & Auckland, 1981, pp.357–8; Barry Gustafson, ‘The National Governments and Social Change (1949–1972)’, in Keith Sinclair, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1990, pp.276–8; Tom

disagree with other aspects of his interpretation. *The Big Blue* had its origins in a Trade Union History Project seminar and its 22 contributions deepened the discussion of the lock-out; however, many of the pieces collected in the volume are narratives told from the perspective of individuals in leadership positions, either during the dispute itself or subsequently.⁴ Anna Green's *British Capital, Antipodean Labour* provided the most sustained alternative understanding of the dispute to Bassett; she argued that the dispute, and conflict on the wharf, grew out of the nature of waterfront work, rather than the individuals involved.⁵ Green, along with several other historians, have examined the decades leading up to 1951, to put the dispute in context, but few discuss the aftermath, which contributes to the skewed picture of the finale as inevitable but uninteresting.⁶ The key question historians have asked about the end of the lock-out has been about strategy: could different union leadership have avoided the defeat through less militant tactics?⁷ Even Green focused on leadership, rather than rank and file in her brief discussion of the end of the dispute.⁸ The focus on strategy suggests a chess-board, a controlled environment where leaders were able to dictate decisions to the pawns they controlled. However, concentrating historical attention on workers'

Brooking, *The History of New Zealand*, Westport, 2004, pp.135–7; James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, pp.299–307. For works that take a broader approach see: Andrea Hotere, 'The 1951 Waterfront Lockout in Port Chalmers', BA Hons thesis, University of Otago, 1989; Melanie Nolan, "'The Women Were Bloody Marvellous': 1951, Gender and New Zealand Industrial Relations', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 16, 2003, pp.117–39; Melanie Nolan, 'Shattering Dreams About Women in the Lockout', David Grant, ed., *The Big Blue: Snapshots of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout*, Christchurch, 2004, pp.59–81; Kathryn Parson, 'The Women's Waterfront Auxiliary', in Grant, pp.55–58; Sherwood Young, 'The Activities and Problems of the Police in the 1951 Waterfront Dispute', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1975.

⁴ For example, Rona Bailey, 'Telling the World "the Other Side of the Story"', pp.38–44; Ken Douglas, '1951 and the Left: A Retrospective', pp.119–23; Judith Fyfe, 'Fuzz Barnes: A Personal Reminiscence', pp.49–52; Ted Thompson, 'On the Wharf after '51', pp.131–8, in Grant. Biographies and memoirs have reinforced this understanding, e.g. Graeme Hunt, *Black Prince: The Biography of Fintan Patrick Walsh*, Auckland, 2004; Tom Bramble, ed., *Never a White Flag: The Memoirs of Jock Barnes*, Wellington, 1998; Marcia Spencer, *The Incoming Tide: Sir William Sullivan and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute*, Wellington, 1998.

⁵ Anna Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915–1951*, Dunedin, 2001.

⁶ For examples of studies which focus on the period before 1951 see: Wayne Townsend, 'From Bureau to Lockout: Lyttelton Waterside Workers 1920s to 1951', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1985; Green, and Hotere. Bassett and Christine Meade provide most information about the end of the dispute and focus on politics and institutions respectively Bassett, pp.196–212; 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.

⁷ Tom Bramble explores and responds to this historiography in his introduction to Jock Barnes's autobiography, Bramble, pp.18–26.

⁸ Green, pp.146–9.

decisions in the last month of the dispute demonstrates that the dispute was not a game that anyone controlled, and the actions of pawns were as important as the actions of any other piece.

The origins of the 1951 waterfront lock-out have been covered elsewhere, and so a brief summary will suffice here. The immediate post-war period was a time of repeated and intense conflict on the waterfront; in the lead-up to 1951, industrial conflict on the waterfront was triggered by disagreements over the payment of dirt money, the union's safety concerns, wages and, as Green points out, the struggle for control.⁹ The waterfront dispute began in February 1951 as a disagreement over wages, but quickly escalated into a major conflict: the waterside workers refused to work overtime and the shipping companies responded by locking the workers out. The Holland National government took control of the lock-out and committed itself to dismantling the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union; cabinet granted itself extraordinary powers through emergency regulations that limited freedom of speech and criminalised the provision of money or food to waterside workers. The draconian nature of these regulations brought coal-miners, freezing workers and seamen out on strike in support of the locked-out waterside workers. The government had to find labour to replace 8000 watersiders if Holland was going to claim victory and the economy was going to continue to function. From 27 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 to persuade watersiders to return to work on their terms, or to recruit a new workforce.¹⁰

Three medium sized branches of the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union, New Plymouth, Timaru and Port Chalmers, voted to return to work before July 1951. These branches give a sense of the sort of decisions workers were making. The Timaru branch had a history of conflict with the national union, which appears to explain those workers decision to return to work.¹¹ When the New Plymouth branch voted to return to work, Jock Barnes

⁹ Ibid., pp.132–43.

¹⁰ 'The Waterfront Strike Emergency Regulations 1951', *Statutory Regulations 1951*, Wellington, 1951, p.69-70; Grant, ed., *The Big Blue*, p.183.

¹¹ New Zealand Waterside Workers Union, Report of the Twenty-Seventh Conference, 6-15 December 1949, 84-058-1/16, Hill Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

dismissed it as a bad port, but unlike Timaru there is no evidence of a history of conflict with the national office.¹² Norman Quinlan, a New Plymouth watersider, 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 Scott offered a different explanation; after describing strikebreakers beginning work Scott stated: “The strikebreakers slowly grew in numbers and the following week the branch cracked.”¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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 never 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. On 8 June, Port Chalmers watersiders voted to return to work as a branch.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ Neil Crichton, the president of the Port Chalmers branch, stated publicly that it was hardship, and the threat of strikebreakers that drove watersiders back.¹⁷ In Port Chalmers, the return to work in June was partly driven by short-term economic hardship, but it was also driven by the

¹² Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, Auckland University Library (AUL).

¹³ Scott, *151 Days*, p.103.

¹⁴ Strike Returns, 26 April 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ (Archives New Zealand).

¹⁵ Hotere, p.78.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.81.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.79.

threat of strikebreakers, the same factors that had led New Plymouth workers back to the wharf.

Very few union members ended up working as strikebreakers; even at the beginning of July only 610 men had registered to work on the wharf from branches that had remained out.¹⁸ A far more common way that individuals withdrew from the dispute was to get work in another industry. This would not get them named ‘scab’, but was also not treated as a legitimate survival strategy. In Auckland, those who sought to do outside work had to apply to the executive for permission, and in the early months permission was only granted in exceptional circumstances.¹⁹ As 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’.²⁰ Or, as a watersider’s child understood it: ‘I got the impression that if you took other work, you were a scab.’²¹ Supporting strikers, the press and the government also saw the taking of other work as a sign of watersiders’ weakness.²² The cumulative effect of locked-out workers taking work in other industries can be seen in Auckland. On 29 May 1951, the new union in Auckland had 1,400 members, and the executive decided to close its membership.²³ Once this occurred, substantial numbers of Auckland watersiders withdrew from the dispute and sought work in other industries as they believed they would not be able to return to work on the wharf. In the first three months of the lockout, just ten men applied for clearance (permission to get other work from the branch), in early June there were five applications for clearance a week, and in the last week of June there were over twenty.²⁴ Some applications addressed this directly; one watersider wrote:

¹⁸ Strike Returns, 2 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

¹⁹ Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 16 March 1951–10 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁰ Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 6 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²¹ Maureen Fairey, Oral History Interview, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, author’s possession.

²² Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Barnes Papers. AUL; Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, Oral History Centre, ATL; ‘Many waterside strikers now in full-time jobs in various other industries’, 5 April 1951, *Dominion*, ADMO, 21007, 25/9/20/6 Part 1, ANZ; Report of Dave Patterson, Wellington, 1 April 1951, ADMO 21007, 25/9/20/12, ANZ; Report of E.G. Ward, Lyttelton, 1 April 1951 and Report of Duncan Wilson, Oamaru, 31 March 1951, ADMO, 21007, 25/9/20/2 Part 1, ANZ; Report Bluff, 2 May 1951, ADMO 21007, 25/9/20/3, ANZ.

²³ Strike Returns, 29 May 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

²⁴ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meetings of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 27 February-10 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

“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.”²⁵ 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 Auckland, with or without clearances.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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.

In the first week of July, a cascade of local decisions at ports and mines made the continuation of the dispute untenable. At a meeting in mid-June, miners’ representatives had expressed how difficult their position was.²⁸ Striking coal-miners articulated the same questions as watersiders when deciding how long they could remain out: what was the cost of remaining out and was that cost worth the risk? The two main mining areas were Huntly and the West Coast. On the West Coast there were no strikebreakers, either on the waterfront or in the mines; over five months just eight men registered an interest in working on the wharf with the Department of Labour, which was insufficient to start working the wharf with civilian labour.²⁹ In Huntly, there were strikebreakers, but they were only working in open-cast mines. However, armed forces were working in both areas, and their strikebreaking labour created more of a threat to the coal-miners than it did to the watersiders. As the coal-miners were on a supporting strike, rather than fighting their own battle, the defence forces only needed to provide enough coal for the duration of the lock-out to nullify the coal-miners’ support for the watersiders. The representatives of the Westport branch of the Watersiders

²⁵ R. B. Jones to R. Jones, [1951], 94-106-11/04, Roth papers, ATL.

²⁶ Telephone Message Detective Sergeant R. Jones, 11 May 1951, ADMO, 21007, 25/9/20/1, ANZ.

²⁷ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 23 June 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

Union made the relationship between cost and risk clear: ‘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.’³⁰ On 26 and 27 June, miners in eight mines in the Buller district returned to work.³¹ Thirteen days earlier their representatives had said that the Buller Central committee “would have difficulty in holding the position for more than a week.”³² Other mines followed; between Tuesday 3 July and Friday 6 July miners at all mines but one returned to work.³³ Miners at Ohura returned to work the following week on Monday 9 July.³⁴ 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.”³⁵ Miners explained their decision to return to work by emphasising the difficult position they were in, but just as importantly – they had come to believe 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.³⁶ 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.³⁷ 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.”³⁸ At a members’ meeting the following day, Wednesday 4 July, Alex Drennan spoke about clearances:

³⁰ Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Barnes Papers, AUL.

³¹ ‘Department of Labour, Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute’, Buller, 1951, AANK W 3285/7, ANZ.

³² Minutes of Meeting of Unions Directly Involved in Waterfront Dispute, 13 June 1951, Box 1, Vault 156, Barnes Papers, AUL.

³³ Department of Labour, Final Returns of Strike or Industrial Dispute’, Miners, 1951, AANK W 3285/7, ANZ.

³⁴ Department of Labour, Final Return of Strike or Industrial Dispute’, Ohura, 1951, AANK W 3285/7, ANZ.

³⁵ Minutes of Joint Action Committee, 5 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³⁶ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 3 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *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.³⁹

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".⁴⁰ 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 substantial number of Lyttelton workers had wanted to return to work for some time.⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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 700.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

Most discussions of the end of the 1951 waterfront dispute have focused on the actions of Jock Barnes and assumed that workers relied on the decision of the leadership. An Auckland branch leader told Green: '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

³⁹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 4 July 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Strike Returns, 1 June 1951–29 June 1951, AANK W 3285/7; Report of E G Ward, Lyttelton, 5 June 1951, ADMO, 21007, 25/9/20/2 part 2, ANZ.

⁴² Strike Returns, 1 July 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

were winning when they were losing'.⁴⁵ However, the examination of what happened in New Plymouth, Port Chalmers, Auckland, Lyttelton and in coal mining areas demonstrate that workers were making their own decisions – and evaluating the likelihood of winning, and that the presence of outside strikebreakers was critical to their decisions. Throughout the dispute, strikebreakers begat strikebreakers; the more strikebreakers there were working on the wharf the more likely former workers were to go back. The number of former watersiders registered with the Department of Labour in Dunedin leapt from just seven on 8 June to 61 on 11 June after the nearby Port Chalmers branch went back to work as a branch.⁴⁶ The ports where significant numbers of watersiders went back to work as individuals, such as Bluff and Nelson, had a high level of strikebreakers registered from early on in the dispute.⁴⁷ Fewer strikebreakers also meant a stronger branch. At the beginning of the lock-out there were 2200 workers on the Wellington wharf and the Department of Labour struggled to get strikebreakers in the area.⁴⁸ Although the number of members of the new union steadily increased from 66 at the end of May to 409 by 12 July, this was less than a fifth of the size of the previous workforce, and therefore those who were locked-out could believe that they were going to be able to return to their jobs.⁴⁹ After the dispute ended, almost everyone who wished to return to work on the wharf in Wellington was able to do so, including union militants.⁵⁰ In Wellington, because there were proportionally fewer strikebreakers, there was neither an exodus to other work, nor a last minute rush to get back to limited places. One of the assumptions of most analysis of the 1951 waterfront dispute has been that the workers' defeat was inevitable; watersiders could not win when they were fighting the full power of the state.⁵¹ The availability of strikebreakers has been taken for granted in the historical discussion. For example, Dick Scott stated that he believed government had too many advantages for the watersiders to overcome, listing economic and industrial factors, but he does not mention strikebreakers.⁵² Holland's government could not win alone, or even with the help of the Federation of Labour. It needed replacement labour to move sugar off ships

⁴⁵ Green, p.146.

⁴⁶ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁴⁷ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁴⁸ Bassett, p.100; Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁴⁹ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁵⁰ G.E. Breeze to H.L. Bockett, 4 October 1951, AANK W3285 7, ANZ.

⁵¹ For example, Noel Woods, 'Setting the Scene', in Grant, pp.15–21.

⁵² Scott, *A Radical Writer's Life*, p.159.

and lamb carcasses on.⁵³ The availability of this labour could not be taken for granted, as on the West Coast there were no strikebreakers, and in Wellington there were not enough to pose a threat to the existing union. To suggest Holland's victory was inevitable is to ignore the importance of strikebreaking labour.

Despite the vital role they played in bringing about the end of the 1951 waterfront dispute, strikebreakers have received little attention from historians. The lack of historical attention to strikebreakers is not unique to this industrial dispute, or newly discovered.⁵⁴ As William Tuttle, a US labour historian, observed in 1966: 'Despite their obvious significance in labor history, little is known about strikebreakers: who they were; their motives in signing on for such employment. Strikebreakers are anonymities; yet in order to understand labor history, especially during its turbulent phases, much needs to be known about them'.⁵⁵ While historians have gone some way to respond to Tuttle's challenge, their focus has been on the ways that strikebreakers were different from the workers they replaced. Alun Burge's study of scabbing in interwar Wales paints a picture of the strikebreaker as an individual whose actions place him beyond the pale.⁵⁶ The most extended discussion on any aspect of strikebreaking is from the United States, where historians have explored the image and the reality of African-American strikebreakers. Historians have come at this idea from different angles: in the 1970s Mark Stern sympathetically examined the perspective of African-American strikebreakers, while Jerrell Shofner challenged the idea of African-American

⁵³ Robert Bollard has recently made a similar argument about the importance of strikebreakers in the 1917 strike in Eastern Australia, although he focuses more on the lack of union effort to confront strikebreakers. Robert Bollard, 'The Great Strike of 1917 – Was Defeat Inevitable?', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 56, 2, 2010, pp. 159-172.

⁵⁴ A search of 'strikebreak*' and 'scab*' from 2010-2014 in the database Historical Abstracts results in just three relevant articles, one of which only mentions strikebreakers in passing: Robert Bollard, 'The Great Strike of 1917 – Was Defeat Inevitable?', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 56, 2, 2010, pp.159-172; Elizabeth Shesko, 'Constructing Roads, Washing Feet, and Cutting Cane for the *Parita*: Building Bolivia with Military Labour, 1900-75', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 80, 2011, pp.6-28; Anastasia Dukova, 'Policing the Lockout: The Role of the DMP', *History Ireland*, July-August 2012, pp.32-33.

⁵⁵ W.M. Tuttle, 'Some Strikebreakers' Observations of Industrial Warfare', *Labor History*, 7, 2, 1966, p.193.

⁵⁶ Alun Burge, 'In Search of Harry Blount: Scabbing Between the Wars in One South Wales Community', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh Labour History/Cylchgrawn Hanes Llafur Cymru*, 6, 3, 1994, pp.58-69.

strikebreakers by examining an African-American strike broken by white workers.⁵⁷ More recent work has explored the portrayal of race and strikebreaking in the movie *Matewan* and the role of convict labour.⁵⁸ The discussion of African-American strikebreakers in the US is one example of a wider literature that discusses strikebreaking in terms of ethnicity and difference, particularly immigration.⁵⁹ Most of this work in some way explores the idea that immigrants are more likely to work as strikebreakers, although John Chalcraft recently added to this debate by arguing that migration can increase political and industrial unrest.⁶⁰ The predominant historical approach to strikebreakers has been to explore them as outsiders.⁶¹

The role of ethnicity in strikebreaking seems a promising place to start an examination of strikebreakers during the 1951 waterfront dispute, as there is some evidence of a significant number of Māori strikebreakers.⁶² On the Auckland wharf, which had employed

⁵⁷ M. Stern, 'Black Strikebreakers in the Coal Fields: King County, Washington—1891', *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 5, 1977, pp.60–70; Jerrell H. Shofner, 'The Labor League of Jacksonville: A Negro Union and White Strikebreakers', *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 50, 3, 1972, pp.278–82.

⁵⁸ Charles Zappia, 'Labor, Race, and Ethnicity in the West Virginia Mines: Matewan', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 30, 4, 2011, pp.44–50; Ethan Blue, 'A Parody on the Law: Organized Labor, the Convict Lease, and Immigration in the Making of the Texas State Capitol', *Journal of Social History*, 43, 4, 2010, pp.1021–44. Other articles that have in some way taken the image of African-American strikebreakers as their starting point include: H. Gitelman, 'Perspectives on American Industrial Violence', *The Business History Review*, 47, 1, 1973, pp.1–23; John Keiser, 'Black Strikebreakers and Racism in Illinois 1865–1900', *Illinois State Historical Society*, 65, 1984, pp.313–26; Warren Whatley, 'African-American Strikebreaking from the Civil War to the New Deal', *Social Science History*, 17, 4, 1993, pp.525–58; Cliff Brown and Terry Boswell, 'Strikebreaking or Solidarity in the Great Steel Strike of 1919: A Split Labor Market, Game-Theoretic, and QCA Analysis', *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, 6, 1995, pp.1479–519; Eric Arnesen, 'Specter of the Black Strikebreaker: Race, Employment, and Labor Activism in the Industrial Era', *Labor History*, 44, 3, 2003, pp.319–35.

⁵⁹ Joanne Cayford, 'In Search of John Chinaman: Press Representations of the Chinese in Cardiff 1906–1911', *Llafur: Journal of Welsh Labour History/Cylchgrawn Hanes Llafur Cymru*, 5, 4, 1991, pp.37–50; Kenneth Lunn, 'Immigrants and Strikes: Some British Case Studies, 1870–1914', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 4, 2, 1985, pp.30–42; R.L. Ehrlich, 'Immigrant Strikebreaking Activity: A Sampling of Opinion Expressed in the National Labor Tribune, 1878–1885', *Labor History*, 15, 4, 1974, pp.529–42; Stefano Luconi, 'Crossing Borders on the Picket Line: Italian-American Workers and the 1912 Strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts', *Italian Americana*, 28, 2, 2010, pp.149–61.

⁶⁰ John Chalcraft, 'Migration and Popular Protest in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf in the 1950s and 1960s', *International Labor & Working-Class History*, 79, 2011, pp.28–47.

⁶¹ Further examples of this include British literature which discusses upper-class strikebreakers, and working-class reaction to them: 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, pp.331–49; Rachele Saltzman, 'Folklore as Politics in Great Britain: Working-Class Critiques of Upper-Class Strike Breakers in the 1926 General Strike', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 67, 3, 1994, pp.105–21.

⁶² Kerry Taylor discusses Māori strikebreakers in 1951 in his article in *On the Left*. Kerry Taylor, "'Potential Allies of the Working Class": The Communist Party of New Zealand and Maori, 1921–1951', in Pat Moloney and Kerry Taylor, eds, *On the Left: Essays on Socialism in New Zealand*, Dunedin, 2002, pp.103–15.

about 75 Māori workers before the lock-out, there were 400-600 Māori strikebreakers.⁶³ In Gisborne, although there is no record of the ethnicity of the pre-lock-out workforce, the majority of strikebreakers were also Māori.⁶⁴ On closer examination, however, the evidence about Māori strikebreakers demonstrates the limits of focusing on the differences between strikebreakers and the existing workforce. In Auckland and Gisborne, government, press and union sources independently described the number of Māori strikebreakers, and in doing so marked and drew attention to Māori.⁶⁵ In other ports, the same sources remain silent about the ethnicity of strikebreakers, which strongly implies that the majority of strikebreakers were Pākehā.⁶⁶ As sources emphasise the outsider status of strikebreakers, strikebreaking outsiders have received historical attention that was disproportionate to their presence.

To go beyond existing historiographical approaches to strikebreakers as outsiders, it is important to understand the limitation of the sources on strikebreakers. The existence of strikebreakers is often well-documented. In 1951, the Department of Labour carefully assembled tables keeping track of how many people were working in each port and unions went to great lengths to create accurate scab-lists.⁶⁷ Despite this, any further information about strikebreakers beyond their existence is very difficult to access. The Department of Labour was interested in numbers not in names, identifies or any other information. Union scab-lists just include the surname and the initial of strike-breaking workers; the name D. Ashley or F. H. Adams by themselves provide little information about who these men were or why they made the decisions they did.⁶⁸ In contrast with the effort that others put into documenting strikebreakers, strikebreakers have not wanted to be remembered as such by those around them. The starkest evidence of this is the UK 1985/6 miners' strike, by the end of which the majority of miners had gone back to work as strikebreakers. This strike was

⁶³ The figures vary depending on who provides them. See 'Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951', 1952, 94-106-10/3, Roth Papers, ATL; 'Maori Wharf Workers Settle Differences', *Sunday Star*, 18 June 1951, CAHV CH21, Box 73 1951/136/2 Part 1, ANZ.

⁶⁴ Strike Returns, 8 May 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁶⁵ 'Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951', 1952, 94-106-10/3; Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 19 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL; 'Maori Wharf Workers Settle Differences', *Sunday Star*, 18 June 1951, CAHV CH21, Box 73 1951/136/2 Part 1; Strike Returns, 8 May 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁶⁶ For example, 'Freezing Workers Bulletin', 26 June 1951, Roth Papers, 94-106-12/4, ATL.

⁶⁷ Strike Returns, 19 April 1951–12 July 1951, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ; Papers re strikebreakers, MS-Papers-8572-02, Scott Papers, ATL.

⁶⁸ 'Scab', 9 July 1951, 90-295, Goddard Papers, ATL.

exceptionally well documented. Academics, journalists and lay people recorded the experiences of those involved as a political act and therefore there is a literature, far larger than in any other industrial dispute that documents the memories of strikers and their families.⁶⁹ Even though hundreds of people have had extracts of their stories published, and strikebreaking was a majority experience, there is only one account of a strikebreaker.⁷⁰ Moreover, that account begins with a long narration about why the strikebreaker does not want to be recorded. The same silence exists in oral history interviews about 1951, where a substantial body of oral histories have been recorded and many of those actively involved with the unions have been interviewed multiple times.⁷¹ Again, there is only one interview with a strikebreaker, and it only mentions working on the wharf in passing.⁷² Writing about strikebreakers is challenging for historians, because strikebreakers have tended to try and erase any record or memory of that work. As Alan Burge wrote: ‘Historians have paid little attention to scabs. Nor have scabs been anxious to promote their cause.’⁷³

Oral histories record a similar dynamic of those involved in the dispute actively remembering strikebreakers, and the invisibility of strikebreaking experiences. Hester Barron’s discussion of memory and the 1926 miners’ lock-out in Durham provides a useful starting point for an analysis of memories of 1951.⁷⁴ Engaging with recent historiographical

⁶⁹ For example, Lynn Beaton, *Shifting Horizons*, London, 1985; David Bell, *The Dirty Thirty: Heroes of the Miners’ Strike*, Nottingham, 2009; J. Keating, *Counting the Cost: A Family in the Miners’ Strike*, 1991; Jill Miller, *You Can’t Kill the Spirit: Women in a Welsh Mining Village*, London, 1986; T. Parker, *Red Hill: A Mining Community*, London, 1986; Chrys Salt and Jim Layzell, *Here We Go!: Women’s Memories of the 1984/85 Miners’ Strike*, London, 1986; J. Witham, *Hearts and Minds: The Story of the Women of Nottinghamshire in the Miners’ Strike 1984-1985*, London, 1984; Monica Shaw and Mave Mundy, ‘Complexities of Class and Gender Relations: Recollections of Women Active in the 1984-5 Miner’s Strike’, *Capital & Class*, 29, 3, January 1, 2005, pp.151–74.

⁷⁰ Parker.

⁷¹ The oral history projects held by the ATL Oral History Centre that discuss the dispute most fully include: Shaun Ryan, Trade Union Oral History Project, 1998–9, OHColl-0478; Kerry Taylor, Trade Union 1951 Oral History Project, 1995, OHColl-0861; Cath Kelly, Trade Union Oral History Project, 1987–9, OHColl-0112; Robert Paton, Labour Movement Oral History Project, 1991 OHColl-0056; Jamie McKay, Huntly Coalfields Oral History Project, 1992. As well as over 50 interviews related to the dispute, the ATL Oral History Centre also holds materials from seminars and other public events that include participants’ memories of 1951, such as Confrontation ’51 Seminar, 2001 OHColl-0538. In addition to the interviews at the ATL Oral History Centre, this article uses interviews from the Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, which comprises of 15 interviews recorded by Grace Millar 2010–2011.

⁷² Vavuara Aukino, Oral History Interview, OHint-0337-1, ATL Oral History Centre.

⁷³ Burge, p.59.

⁷⁴ Hester Barron, *The 1926 Miners’ Lockout: Meanings of Community in the Durham Coalfield*, Oxford, 2009, pp.225–53. Lynn Abrams provides a useful overview of the larger historiographical discussion: Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, London, 2010, pp.99–103.

debates on individual and collective memory, Barron demonstrated the work that mining communities put into maintaining a collective memory of 1926 based on solidarity. Memories of solidarity involved both heroic narratives of those involved in the lock-out and ‘remorseless demonization’ of those who had worked as strikebreakers.⁷⁵ However, she pointed out that despite the similarities of narratives of solidarity, there were also significant variations in narratives about the 1926 miners’ lock-out. She argued that individual’s accounts relate to the collective memory of mining communities, but that narrators also have to make sense of their memories in terms of their own life story.⁷⁶ Discussion of strikebreakers in oral histories often reflected the union-based collective narrative about strikebreakers, which is available from archival sources, both in vilifying strikebreakers, and in emphasising the importance of remembering them.⁷⁷ Oral history narratives that discuss strikebreakers tend to emphasise conflict, but they also demonstrate that strikebreaking and locked-out workers lived on the same streets and used the same institutions. This is consistent with research into the 1912 Waihi strike, where mapping of strikers and strikebreakers has shown that they lived side-by-side.⁷⁸ Johnny Mitchell described a fight with his strikebreaking neighbour in Freeman’s Bay; Gwendolene Pawson talked about physical fights with the children of strikebreakers at her Napier Catholic school; Kevin Ford recalled ‘getting a hiding’ from his father if he played with the neighbouring son of a strikebreaker.⁷⁹ In addition some children remember how their father’s remained hostile to strikebreakers for decades. Maureen Fairey said: ‘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’.⁸⁰ Kevin Ford remembered the way his father continued to fight the dispute with his strikebreaking neighbour: ‘when the scab got a TV aerial up, Dad went to Invercargill the next day to get a TV aerial up at our place. If the scab got something,

⁷⁵ Barron, p.229.

⁷⁶ Barron, pp.232–3.

⁷⁷ See for example, Ted Thompson Oral History Interview, OhInt-0112/3, ATL Oral History Centre; Tom and Pat Gregory Oral History Interview, 20 December 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, author’s possession.

⁷⁸ *New Zealand Historical Atlas*, Malcolm McKinnon, ed., *Bateman New Zealand Historical Atlas; Ko Papatuanuku. E Takoto Nei*, Auckland, 1997, plate 64.

⁷⁹ Johnny Mitchell Oral History Interview, OHInt-0219/1, ATL Oral History Centre; Gwendolene Pawson Oral History Interview, 6 January 2011; Kevin Ford Oral History Interview 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, author’s possession.

⁸⁰ Maureen Fairey Oral History Interview, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, author’s possession.

Dad got something'.⁸¹ This material emphasised the depth of feeling towards strikebreakers, but there is a limit to how much it can help develop our analysis. In order to fully explore what oral history accounts can tell us about strikebreaking, we must look for material that goes beyond the narrative of solidarity, and includes the more personal memories that Barron uncovered in 1926.

The history of strikebreakers has also been influenced by the ferocity with which union members ensured strikebreakers were remembered. Alan Burge, in his article about interwar strikebreaking in Wales, quoted an interview from 1978: 'If you talk about Seary... the first thing that springs to mind is that he was a scab. It's a name that's with them forever. BRANDED. It will be with their children. BRANDED.'⁸² Unions have created an absolute distinction line between strikebreakers and non-strikebreakers. Only those who actually started work on the wharf have their names put on 'scab-lists' or count on the government's careful tally. This absolute distinction suits the purposes of those producing sources, but historians do not have to accept it. Jim Gibson was a seaman who was on strike in 1951 and in his oral history he describes the role his father played in reducing the number of strikebreakers in Wellington. Gibson's sister's husband told his father-in-law, Gibson's father, that he was considering getting work on the Wellington waterfront, and Gibson's father replied that his son was on strike and if the son-in-law broke the strike he would no longer be welcome in his house; the son-in-law did not take the work.⁸³ Maureen Martin, whose husband was a striking freezing worker, described the web of relationships and obligations that shaped decision-making in her community:

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

⁸¹ Kevin Ford Oral History Interview, 13 February 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, author's possession.

⁸² Burge, p.58.

⁸³ Jim Gibson Oral History Interview, 14 March 2011, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project, author's possession.

himself down and his family down too.⁸⁴

Due to the government's emergency regulations, some unusual material is located in police files, and narratives of decisions not to work as strikebreakers survive outside of oral histories. William Price talked to his employer about going back to work on the cement works, but then refused to do so, citing threats from other workers. The police investigated and discovered quite another story. His wife had talked to a friend whose husband was also on strike and who said that anyone who returned to the cement works would be going back 'as a scab'. After Price's wife reported the conversation he changed his mind and refused to return to work.⁸⁵ The absolute distinction between 'strikebreaker' and everyone else is not helpful for historians; many men thought about strikebreaking and never crossed a picket line.

The stories of Gibson, Martin and Price also demonstrate that when men were thinking of working as strikebreakers, his relationships with striking workers and their families could persuade him otherwise. Examining the relationships that persuaded workers not to take work on the wharves suggests another way of understanding Māori strikebreakers in a different way. Rather than centring ethnicity as a deciding factor in strikebreaking, the contemporary discussion of Māori strikebreakers can help us explain strikebreaking more generally. Locked-out Māori watersiders formed a committee specifically aimed at persuading other Māori not to work as strikebreakers.⁸⁶ Steve Watene and George Pitman travelled to marae around the upper North Island and spoke against strikebreaking.⁸⁷ Aroha Harris has written about the importance of the connections that Māori who moved to cities maintained with their

⁸⁴ Maureen Martin Oral History Transcript, OHColl-0458/1, ATL Oral History Centre.

⁸⁵ The documents of this investigation have survived in the Nelson Districts Special Branch file about the dispute: ADMO, 21007, 25/9/20/5, ANZ. These examples also demonstrate a point Alessandro Portelli made about the oral origin of some written sources. Two are oral history accounts and the third comes from a police investigation. However, the account in the police file originated as oral accounts to police officers (told under a certain amount of duress). Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, New York, 1991, p.51.

⁸⁶ In 1991, Tom Murray, Kerry Taylor, Tepania Joe and Nora Rameka issued a challenge to labour historians to stop ignoring Māori workers. This challenge has largely remained unanswered. They briefly touch on the events described in this paragraph in their article. Tom Murray, et al, '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, pp.50–59.

⁸⁷ Steve Watene to the Chairman, [1951], 94-106-09/06, Roth Papers, ATL. Herbert Roth discusses this in some depth: Herbert Roth *Wharfie: 'From Hand Barrows to Straddles': Unionism on the Auckland Waterfront*. Auckland, 1993. This article is, as the footnotes suggest, also deeply indebted to his work as an archivist.

homes.⁸⁸ Pitman and Watene used the relationships they had with their own homes and also with other iwi and marae to persuade Māori not to work as strikebreakers. As the Auckland minutes recorded: First of all [Pitman] conveyed greetings from the Maoris [sic] at Ngaruawahia and from Princess Te Puea. At Maramarua there were only 3 Maoris [sic] employed at the open cast works and they will be knocking off.” This account emphasised both on-going relationships and undertakings not to work as strikebreakers.⁸⁹ Māori workers in the deregistered union significantly reduced the number of Māori who were prepared to work on the wharves, by using relationships they had with individuals and marae to advocate against strikebreaking, just as Martin and Gibson had. Examining the decisions of Māori workers also suggests that just because those who decided not to work as strikebreakers did so because of their relationships, it does not follow that strikebreakers were acting as atomised individuals. Instead, Māori strikebreakers who talked about their decision to work on the wharves discussed that decision in terms of their community.⁹⁰ Māori workers made up approximately a quarter of the new union; strike-breaking on the Auckland wharf was a rare opportunity for Māori workers to join a large workplace en masse and participate in shaping that workplace. At a meeting between Māori members of the new and old union, set up by the Waitemātā tribal executive, those working on the wharf stated: ‘If they left the union now they thought they would only be replaced with others who might not be maoris [sic].’⁹¹ While, as has already been mentioned, a feature of strikebreakers is that they rarely discuss their motivations, the limited evidence that exists suggests that strikebreakers could also see their decision in terms of their relationships.

The number of former union members who worked as strikebreakers in different ports, strongly suggests that contrary to the union construction of strikebreaking as an identity, the decision to work as a strikebreaker was contingent for many workers. In total, 821

⁸⁸ Aroha Harris, ‘Concurrent Narratives of Māori and Integration in the 1950s and 60s’, *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 6/7, 2008, pp.139-55; Aroha Harris ‘“Modern in a Traditional Way”: The Māori Search for Cultural Equilibrium in a Saying, a Song and a Short Story’, in Danny Keenan ed. *Huia Histories of Māori: Ngā Tāhuhu Kōrero*, Wellington, 2012, pp. 340-351.

⁸⁹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Members Meeting, 13 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹⁰ Melissa Williams’s works out-lines both the importance and the success of this strategy for Māori in this period, see Melissa Williams ‘Factory-ing Workplaces into Māori History’, *Te Pouhere Kōrero*, 6, 2012, pp.5-26.

⁹¹ ‘Maori Wharf Workers Settle Differences’, 18 June 1951, *Sunday Star*, CAHV CH21 Box 73 1951/136/2 Part 1, ANZ.

watersiders were members of the new, strikebreaking, unions by 6 July 1951, about ten per cent of the union membership.⁹² However, the vast majority of these were from branches such as Port Chalmers who had voted to return to work. At branches where there was no collective vote to return to work, less than five per cent of workers returned to work. No-one registered to work as a strikebreaker in Westport. 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.⁹³ The West Coast mining areas had a strong union history and culture.⁹⁴ 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 difference between workers in Port Chalmers, where eighty per cent returned to work, and workers in Dunedin, where 3 per cent did, was not their opinion about the dispute, or their commitment to unionism, but that in Dunedin workers would be called 'scabs' by their fellow workers and in Port Chalmers they would not. Watersiders made decisions to become a strikebreaker, or not, in relationship to the workers around them.

The complex situation in Lyttelton, further suggests that family and community relationships played an important role in determining who returned to work. 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.⁹⁵ The list of workers who received loyalty cards from the Lyttelton branch and their addresses has survived.⁹⁶ Although this list does not identify strikebreakers, and there is no comparable list of the pre-lockout membership to, this list can be used to deduce information about strikebreakers. Approximately half of those who lived outside of Lyttelton received loyalty

⁹² Strike Returns, 6 July 1951 AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ See Len Richardson, *Coal, Class & Community*, Auckland, 1995.

⁹⁵ Johnny Mitchell, 'Report of Acting Secretary, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union', February 1952, 94-106-10/02, Roth Papers, ATL.

⁹⁶ [List of Watersiders], MB 550/38, Frank McNulty Papers, Macmillan Brown Library (MBL).

cards, while about 90 per cent of those who lived in Lyttelton received loyalty cards.⁹⁷ Living in a port community made men much less willing to work as a strikebreaker.

Strikebreaking is usually explained as either an economic decision, or a result of ideological opposition to the strike or lockout.⁹⁸ There is plenty of evidence of both ideology and economics affecting workers decisions to work as strikebreakers in 1951. Bassett argues that prior to the lock-out it was already difficult for Wellington employers to find labour and that this contributed to the lack of strikebreakers in Wellington.⁹⁹ In Auckland, where there was higher unemployment, strikebreakers were available. The union formed the Māori committee out of recognition of the economic reality that many Māori workers were available to act as strikebreakers. As ‘Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute’, written in 1952, states: ‘While in the Auckland province four-fifths of Maoris [sic] still live in rural areas, the young people are drifting into the towns as a result of economic pressures’.¹⁰⁰ Ronald Belsham, the leader of the new Auckland Waterside Workers Union, had been in conflict with the leadership of the watersiders union, a characteristic he shared with at least one other worker on the Auckland waterfront.¹⁰¹ However, there was also intense economic hardship among workers who remained part of the dispute and plenty of conflict about how to fight it.¹⁰² At every port where a return to work vote was passed, workers returned to work in large numbers; there must have been workers throughout the country who wished to return to work, but would not do so ‘as a scab’. As Maureen Martin and Jim Gibson’s oral histories and William Price’s decision not to return to work demonstrate, the pressure not to work as a

⁹⁷ 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, AANK W 328513 3/5/398, ANZ.

⁹⁸ See for example, 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, pp.331–49; M. Stern, ‘Black Strikebreakers in the Coal Fields: King County, Washington—1891’, *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 5, 1977, pp.60–70; Cliff Brown and Terry Boswell, ‘Strikebreaking or Solidarity in the Great Steel Strike of 1919: A Split Labor Market, Game-Theoretic, and QCA Analysis’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, 6, 1995, pp.1479-519.

⁹⁹ Bassett, p.165.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Lessons of the New Zealand Waterfront Dispute of 1951’, 1952, 94-106-10/3, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁰¹ NZWWU Auckland Branch, Minutes of Special Meeting of Executive & Chairmen of Committees, 17 April 1951, 94-106-11/01, Roth Papers, ATL.

¹⁰² See for example, Jenny Cameron [pseudonym] interview with Grace Millar, 17 April 2012, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Maureen Fairey interview with Grace Millar, 5 July 2010, Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute Oral History Project; Telephone message, From Detective Sergeant Jones to Police Headquarters, Wellington, 4 July 1951, Strikes: 1951 Strike General, ADMO, 21007, 25/9/20, ANZ.

strikebreaker was maintained not just in union meetings, but in kitchens, living rooms, shops, pubs and Plunket rooms. In order to work as an individual strikebreaker in a port without a return to work vote, workers did not just need a reason to work on the wharf, but they also had to ignore any relationships they had with family members, neighbours and others who disapproved of 'scabs'. The biggest predictor of whether or not watersiders worked as strikebreakers was not their economic situation, or their beliefs, but what action workers around them took.

Close study of the end of the 1951 waterfront lock-out demonstrates the importance of expanding our ideas of historical actors past leaders such as Holland and Barnes. On 23 July 1951, Ray Stratton wrote to the Auckland Branch of the waterside workers union letting them know that he had taken other work a month earlier.¹⁰³ His assessment that he must take other work was influenced by the costs he faced, but also by the realisation that he would not work on the wharf again, because of the number of strikebreakers. Stratton, and his comrades who took other work, or refused to do so, as well as those listed on the carefully assembled 'scab lists', all played an important role in the end of the 1951 waterfront dispute. Strikebreakers were the single biggest influence on the day to day decisions that rank and file workers made about the costs and risks of continuing the dispute. The events of 1951 were not a chess match between two teams that had control of their strategy: it was the decisions of the pawns on both sides that determined the result. Locked-out workers, potential strikebreakers, farmers with an interest in breaking the strike, were connected by webs of relationships which influenced the decisions they took and the outcome of the dispute.

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¹⁰³ Ray Stratton to R. Jones, 23 July 1951, Roth Papers, 94-106-11/04, ATL.