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For rank & file control of the MUA - Nationalise the maritime industry under workers' control

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Bosses caught funding dirty tricks campaign

Big business has been caught out funding a dirty tricks campaign that tries to convince us that Howard's WorkChoices is good for workers and the economy.

Crosby/Textor, the market research company managing this campaign, is closely aligned to the Liberal Party. Mark Textor is the Liberal Party's chief political pollster and Lynton Crosby is the former federal director of the Liberal Party.

Business groups have been quick to fund the Crosby/Textor coffers, including:

- \$3 million - Chamber of Commerce;
- \$2.5 million - Business Council;
- \$1 to 2 million - Minerals Council.

The Master Builders Association and the National Farmers Federation have given in principle agreement to hand over \$3 million and \$1 million respectively.

The Crosby/Textor bag of tricks include the systematic release of shock-horror media headlines from a dirt file (which the Liberals then use to attack the "union bosses that control the Labor Party").



Leaked video and audio tapes have been used against:

- Dean Mighell (Electrical Trades Union in Victoria);
- Joe McDonald (Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union in WA);
- John Robertson (Unions NSW Secretary).

All three men did nothing wrong. They were only doing their jobs (even if the odd expletive was used).

Mighell boasted about a pay rise he got for ETU members by threatening industrial action. McDonald was on a building site inspecting safety concerns (which Howard's new laws have made all but illegal). Robertson spoke at a public meeting about campaigning for workers' rights after a possible Rudd election victory.

These union leaders are not out of control - they have been stung in a dirty tricks campaign designed to undermine union support for the campaign against WorkChoices.

The only people out of control are big business and their Liberal and media lapdogs.

Australia's Rich 200 getting richer by the minute

Have you seen the benefits of Australia's 15 year economic boom yet? Australia's richest 200 have.

The latest *Business Review Weekly* Rich 200 list shows how in the space of 12 months:

- The total wealth of the Rich 200 went from \$101.5 billion to \$128.6 billion - an increase of 26.7 percent.
- The average fortune of the Rich 200 has risen by \$180 million to \$688 million.
- The minimum wealth needed to make the list has increased from \$130 million to \$180 million.
- The number of Australian billionaires has increased from 21 to 30.



James Packer tops the list with a personal fortune of \$7.25 billion, closely followed by Westfield magnate Frank Lowy (\$6.51 billion) and cardboard king Richard Pratt (\$5.4 billion).

Both Gina Reinhart (\$4 billion) and Andrew Forrest (\$3.89 billion) can thank iron ore for their vast wealth.

By global standards Australian billionaires are strictly second division. Of the world's 946 billionaires, Packer comes in at 195.

This is a far cry from Microsoft's Bill Gates who holds the top spot with \$63 billion (\$US 56 billion).

Stevedoring bosses still raking it in

Toll Holdings chief executive Paul Little is the undisputed king of the Australian transport and logistics sector.

Toll's \$6.2 billion hostile takeover of Patrick Corporation has seen Paul Little's personal wealth increase from \$531 million to \$876 million in a year (a 65 percent increase).

During the same period Toll Holdings shares have increased by 60 percent.

From July to December 2006, Toll's net profits rose by a staggering 87 percent to \$215 million.

Toll Holdings plans to split the company into two - one company for the freight network and another for the port and rail networks.

The splitting of Toll into two is expected to push Paul Little into the Australian billionaires club.

Despite losing out in Toll's hostile takeover of Patrick, Chris Corrigan is still sitting pretty.



Chris Corrigan

His personal wealth has increased by \$22 million to \$169 million (which was still not enough to keep him on the Rich 200 list).

Of course this could all change if persistent rumours of Corrigan's possible buyout of the Australian arm of Dubai Ports World / P&O are true.

What we do know for certain is that big business is rolling in cash and stevedoring profits are soaring.

When EBA negotiations come around, the bosses will try to tell us they cannot afford to give us decent wage rises and improved conditions.

What rubbish. It's time that maritime workers started to win the same benefits that the bosses have been pocketing for years.



Paul Little

Where has the Labor and union "left-wing" gone?

Kevin Rudd talks about throwing out WorkChoices while planning to keep its anti-worker provisions in place. So you would expect the Labor and union left-wing to call him to account, right? Wrong.

Rudd calls these policies *Forward with Fairness*. Others have dubbed them "WorkChoices Lite" because they maintain large chunks of Howard's anti-union laws.

Rudd plans to keep numerous restrictions on the right to strike (such as outlawing any industrial action during the term of a collective agreement) in place.

Mandatory secret ballots are set to stay, unfair dismissal laws will not be fully restored and the notorious Australian Building & Construction Commission (ABCC) will eventually be replaced in 2010 with a similar anti-union watchdog.

Rudd has buckled under the pressure from big business. But instead of speaking out, the silence from the Labor and union "left" has been deafening.

This was best illustrated during April's Labor Party National Conference. Not one Labor left MP made a squeak of criticism against Rudd's new policies. Numerous former union officials are Labor left MPs.

A few current left wing officials - Doug Cameron (Australian Manufacturing Workers Union), Michele O'Neil (TCFUA - textile union) and Dean Mighell (ETU) - did speak out in defence of the right to strike. But all still voted for Rudd's new policy package.

In fact every single one of the 400 delegates at the ALP conference voted in favour. Among the delegates was a whole array of leading left union officials including MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin.

Rudd has caved in to big business demands to keep some of the worst parts of WorkChoices in place. The Labor and union "left" have caved in to Rudd.

Yet again the fight for workers' rights has come a poor second to the unity of the Labor Party and the unions.

Want to distribute *Vigilance* at your workplace? Get in touch (see details below)

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