



# *The* DISPATCHER

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April 2004

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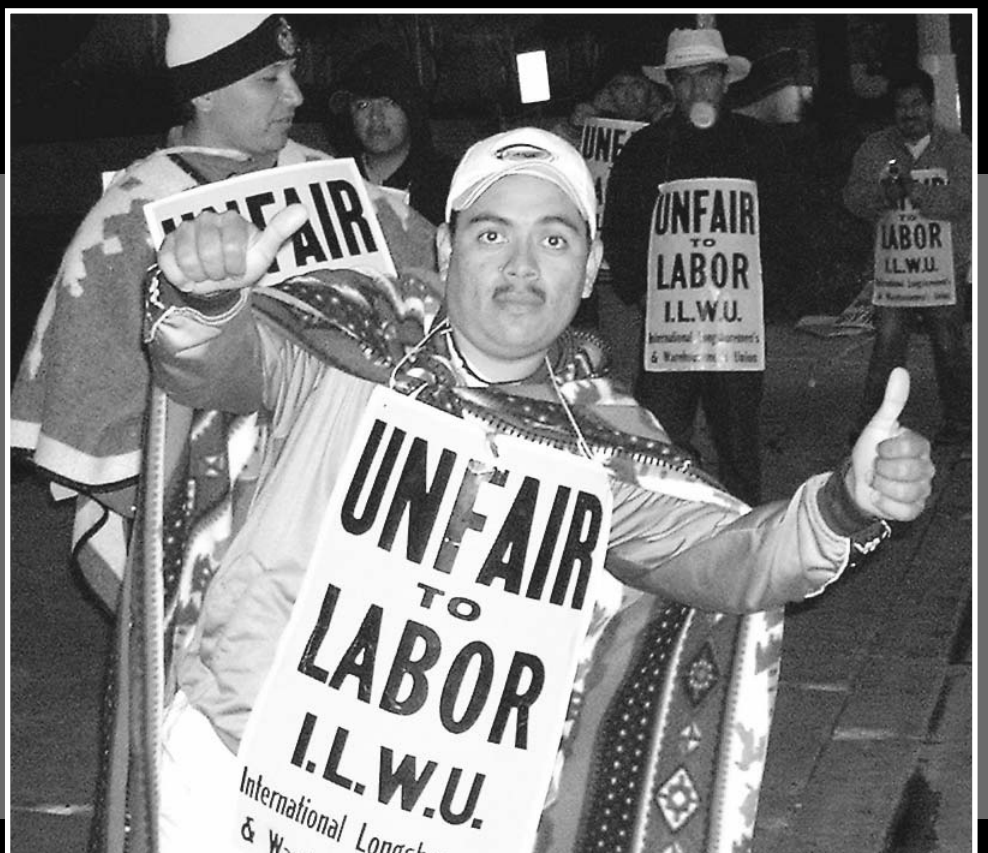


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Inside Line

TRUTH WINS ONE

Every once in a while truth matters and justice prevails. Often it takes too long and usually it takes a hard fight—but that only makes the victory sweeter.

After more than a year, the Alameda County District Attorney finally conceded the truth in what the ILWU, the local anti-war movement and workers and unions around the world have been saying: The government had no case against the protestors they shot, beat and arrested April 7, 2003. The county dropped all the charges against all 25 defendants this April 22. (See page 3.)

Last April a group protesting the war in Iraq set up a picket line at the Oakland terminals of Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) and American President Lines (APL). SSA had received a \$4.8 million no-bid contract from the Bush administration to run Iraq's main port. APL gets millions in federal subsidies for making its ships available to handle war materiel.

ILWU longshore workers stood by, waiting for an arbitrator to rule on the legitimacy of the picket line.

Without cause or warning fully riot-equipped Oakland police attacked the protestors and workers alike, firing "less lethal" wooden dowels, rubber bullets and concussion grenades. They charged the crowd with motorcycles, and the usual clubbing and kicking. Scores were injured, many sent to the hospital with severe wounds. Twenty-four protestors and ILWU longshore Local 10 Business Agent Jack Heyman were arrested on bogus charges.

The police assault on demonstrators and longshore workers that day was an unprovoked, premeditated attack on the Constitutional rights of American citizens. This not only wasn't "what democracy looks like," the United Nations Human Rights Commission listed the incident as among the worst human rights violations of 2003.

For nearly a year, the prosecution delayed handing over the evidence they said they had against the arrested, which the defense had a legal right to obtain. After making numerous court appearances without complying with the discovery requests and faced with a judge who was clearly tiring of the delay tactics, the DA's office dropped the charges.

You might well wonder why the authorities took so long to see it our way and why they suddenly "got religion" when they would have to come clean with information.

If you guessed the answer was the civil rights suit against the City of Oakland and Alameda County for violation of First Amendment rights in both cases, you win. The cops' own video tapes proved the defense's case, so the prosecution couldn't use them. And if they did, the tapes would be used as evidence in the civil rights suit.

But when those tapes get subpoenaed in the civil case, someone will be held accountable. There will be no ducking out, no charges to drop. Check mate.

Elsewhere in this issue, Tom Price provides highlights of the ILWU Canada convention (page 11) and Lindsay McLaughlin reports on the ILWU's legislative conference in D.C. (pages 4-5), where 55 officers and rank-and-filers took our message to the belly of the beast.

—Steve Stallone  
Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Explosion exposes port security holes

By James Spinosa  
ILWU International President

The container explosion at the Port of Los Angeles April 28 shattered any notion that we have security or safety in U.S. ports.

This container's abbreviated voyage over highways, through port gates and nearly onto a ship broke almost every transportation safety and security regulation, from those of the Dept. of Transportation and U.S. Customs to the Marine Transportation Security Act (MTSA) and the new Coast Guard regulations that become mandatory as of July 1—not to mention the ILWU-PMA Safety Code. It slipped through cracks wide enough to drive a 40-foot container through and yet no alarms went off. It came within minutes of causing a horrific catastrophe—one that could have been avoided if the ILWU's security proposals were implemented.

The incident proved—if there were ever any doubt—that our employers are more concerned with productivity and profit than security and safety. Their proposals to require background checks and biometric identification cards for longshore workers represent cynical and punitive attacks on unionized workers rather than real security measures. And the changes in technology and procedures already implemented over the last few years have weakened port security rather than bolstering it.

The container, loaded and sealed by a private party, was bound for Micronesia on the *Micronesian Heritage*. But the terminal operator, TraPac, didn't get any information on where it came from or get a list of its contents. Instead, it was simply listed as "FAK," that is, freight of all kinds. The company that leased the container to the private party had paperwork on its contents, but did not forward that to the terminal. That document showed that the container had in it a pickup truck carrying enough flammable goods that it should have been placarded as hazardous material and treated as such.

The container was driven over interstate highways to the terminal without a hazardous materials placard, a violation of Dept. of Transportation regulations. The driver most likely was not licensed to haul hazardous materials, but we may never know for certain. The terminal has no record of the driver, though it allowed him entrance.

A TraPac superintendent dismissed the union's concerns about the failure to check the driver's identification with the less than reassuring comment that they don't bother with such formalities anymore, because half the truckers' licenses are phony anyway.

In the past, an FAK container was sent to the trouble window when it arrived at the terminal. There the seal was broken and its contents inspected and compared to the manifest. But the new computerized operating systems are so watered down, our marine clerks don't have access to the information to review and compare the contents.

The container that blew up was closed with a personal padlock instead of a proper seal. In the past, ILWU workers routinely opened any improperly sealed cans, inspected the con-

tents and then sealed them properly. They are no longer allowed to do this.

An ILWU longshore worker was driving the container on a UTR, headed shipside to load it when it exploded, blowing out the top and back doors and spewing its contents all down the aisle. If the explosion had blown out the front end instead of the back end of the container, our union brother driving could have been killed.

The system failed in every way. There was no record of who loaded the container, the seal was unverifiable, the driver wasn't identified, the contents were unknown and not accounted for. We were fortunate to escape with so little damage.

But what if the explosion had happened a few minutes later, when the container was under the hook? A clerk, three swingmen and a foreman would likely have been close by. If it exploded while being lifted, what might have happened to the crane, the crane driver and those below on the dock? And if the explosion had waited until the container was aboard the vessel? This container, not being placarded as hazardous, was slated to be placed under another containing highly flammable fuel. Coast Guard officials told the union that if it had blown up then, it would have caused a chain reaction, likely blowing up the entire ship and killing everyone on board.

It is most disturbing to hear our employers and port authorities play down the seriousness of these safety and security lapses, telling the press it was just a small explosion and the chances of it happening again are one in a billion. Properly securing our ports is vital to protect our union brothers and sisters, our communities and our nation all at the same time.

For more than two years the ILWU has taken the lead on port security issues, insisting that our members are the first line of defense on the waterfront. We know we have had systems in place, such as container seal checks and thorough reviews of manifests, that could have prevented this container from being mishandled. We know the new computer systems are capable of giving us the information we need to do the job properly. And we know that under the new contract that is our work. But we need the tools and the training to be the eyes and ears providing safety and security, and the employers have so far refused to provide them.

The ILWU Coast Committee and its Legislative Action Committee have been lobbying in Washington, D.C. on this issue. They testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations, chaired by Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and Sen. Fritz Hollings (D-SC) about the need to do everything possible to secure U.S. port terminals and to develop contingency plans for rerouting cargo in case of an accident or terrorist incident. The subcommittee agreed those plans need to be made.

The ILWU also urges the Coast Guard to take all necessary action to require employers subject to the MTSA to implement security plans immediately.

If the employers and the government don't heed the wake-up call in this explosion, we fear much worse catastrophes to come.



The TraPac incident proved that our employers are more concerned with productivity and profit than security and safety.

The DISPATCHER

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# Container explosion stops work at LA port

By Steve Stallone and Marcy Rein

In less than a minute on April 28, a container exploding in the Port of Los Angeles exposed all the threats the Congressional hearings, government agency regulations and industry press hand-wringing on port security have never effectively addressed.

“The container violated nearly every rule of shipping that could be violated, from how it was packed to being transported without proper warnings to being waved through the gate without necessary information or inspection,” said Dave Arian, president of longshore Local 13.

The container, bound for Micronesia and about to be loaded aboard the *Micronesian Heritage* at the Trans Pacific Container Service Corp. (TraPac) terminal, had been packed and shipped by a private party. It slid through the gate even though it lacked a proper seal and manifest. It was closed with only a padlock, supposedly a violation of terminal rules, and its contents were described simply as FAK, that is “freight of all kinds,” a category no longer allowed for imports under post-Sept. 11 security regulations and previously required to be inspected if exported.

An ILWU casual longshore worker, Robert Vargas, was draying the container to the crane around 1:30 p.m. when the can blew, blasting out its top, sides and back doors and scattering its contents across the terminal. Vargas escaped without injury.

“If those doors had faced the opposite way, Vargas wouldn’t be here today,” said Local 13 day Business Agent Gilbert Fernandez, who arrived on the scene about 20 minutes after the explosion. “It looked

like a war zone,” he said.

The force of the explosion sent a full-size refrigerator flying 64 feet down the aisle, said Local 63 Business Agent Joe Mascola, who also hurried to the terminal.

“Everything else landed in between,” Mascola said. “There was women’s clothes and underwear, Cheez Puffs, Top Ramen, head wraps, shampoo, five body bags—and six or seven boxes of flammables, including lighter fluid and butane stoves.”

A Toyota pick-up had been packed inside the can, with the other goods in its bed. Though the truck’s tank had been empty, firemen on the scene later told Mascola, the fumes apparently had filled the can and been ignited by a spark created by the battery hitting the engine coil.

The container had no labels warning of hazardous materials inside and under current terminal procedures, the ILWU marine clerks hadn’t been able to check it.

“With the new computer systems, the companies don’t allow the clerks access to the screens they need to check the contents,” said Local 63 Secretary Peter Peyton. “The new computer systems should retain the checks and balances in the old system. It’s no good to make cargo movement faster but eliminate those.”

Immediately after the explosion, the ILWU BAs were only thinking about getting their members out of harm’s way. At first they didn’t know the source of the explosion.

“The company was so unsure they sent firemen out with Geiger counters and gauges for air quality,” Mascola said. “But prior to even knowing what caused the explosion, they were ordering people back to work. They had no



This is the container that slid onto the Tra-Pac terminal in the Port of Los Angeles without proper seals or documentation, and then exploded. If it had been loaded with the back doors facing the cab of the truck, the driver would’ve borne the full force of the blast.

concern for the people on the docks.”

The supervisor was still letting in trucks with loads. Though work had stopped on the *Micronesian Heritage*, the ship docked next to it at the terminal was still being worked.

Arian, Mascola and Fernandez told the TraPac supervisor the ILWU wanted the remaining 31 containers slotted for the *Heritage* to be inspected and wanted the gates closed until the area could be secured. TraPac refused, so the union pulled the members off the terminal on a health and safety beef.

Arbitrator David Miller arrived at TraPac around 5p.m. The employers

were claiming the action was an illegal work stoppage, but Miller ruled it was a legitimate health and safety complaint and that the workers should be paid for the full shift. He also ruled that all 31 of the remaining containers must be inspected before being loaded.

TraPac was unable to get the proper government authorities out to the terminal for the inspections immediately, so no work was done that evening. The union wanted a Labor Relations Committee meeting with the employers at 6:00 the next morning to try to agree on how to operate that day and to work out an evacuation plan in case of any more accidents. But the employers refused to meet until 9:00 and then only wanted to discuss the casuals’ refusal to take jobs that day. The employers again accused the union of stopping work illegally, a charge the local denied.

“We just informed the casuals about the situation and that the employers had taken no action to secure the terminals,” Arian said. “They decided themselves not to go to work, mostly because the driver of the UTR with the exploding can was a casual.”

An emergency joint meeting of the executive boards of Locals 13 and 63 and foremen’s Local 91 at noon that day drew more than 2,000 members. The crowd heard from the heads of the Los Angeles and Long Beach Port Police, the Los Angeles Police Dept. and State Sen. Betty Karnette as well as their own officers.

“We have asked the Pacific Maritime Association to immediately implement four procedures we believe will remedy some of the problems facing our communities,” Arian said. Containers must be checked completely at the terminal gates and empties must be opened; containers with questionable documentation must be segregated for more thorough inspection; every port should immediately implement an evacuation plan and begin regular security drills, he said.

After two meetings with the PMA, the employers agreed to begin the security drills and work on the evacuation plans, but they are still stalling on the inspections and documentation.

“The union is also asking each agency involved to do a complete review of the incident,” Peyton said. “We saw violations of Dept. of Transportation, Customs, and Marine Transportation Security Act regulations as well as our contract.”

“This one container shows how far backwards we’ve gone since 9-11,” he said. “The safety of our members and our communities is at risk.”

## Charges against ILWU BA, protestors dropped

OAKLAND—Some 500 demonstrators returned to the Oakland docks April 7, marking the one-year anniversary of the Oakland Police attack on anti-war protestors, longshore workers and the right to dissent. The protestors first gathered outside the Alameda County Courthouse in downtown Oakland for a rally, then reassembled at the West Oakland BART station before marching to the port. This year the police kept their distance from the demonstrators and the employers didn’t order any workers dispatched. The action had an effect larger than intended—the port was shut down for the entire second shift.

Two weeks later, Alameda County Deputy District Attorney Julie Dunger surprised the 25 people arrested after last year’s protest by suddenly dropping all the remaining charges against them. Judge Don Clay’s Superior Court hearing room erupted in cheers April 22 as defen-

dants hugged each other in relief at the end of a year-long ordeal that saw injured protestors falsely charged.

Police fired rubber bullets, bean-bags filled with metal shot and wooden pellets at demonstrators who were peacefully picketing APL and SSA terminals at the Oakland docks April 7, 2003 for their roles in the Iraq war. SSA snagged a no-bid contract to run Iraq’s most important port, Umm Qsar, early in the war. APL gets more than \$18 million per year in subsidies to make nine ships available to ship war materiel.

Longshore workers reporting for duty that day stood down, awaiting an arbitrator’s ruling on the validity of the picket line. Police attacked the demonstrators without warning, shooting their “less lethal” weapons to disperse the crowd.

As many as 50 protestors were injured. Many of them were shot in the back and several were hospital-

ized. Nine ILWU members were hurt, including Billy Kepoo, a steady crane driver at SSA, who sustained serious injuries when he was struck in the hand. Then police brutally arrested longshore Local 10 BA Jack Heyman while he performed his duties in trying to get ILWU members out of the area.

In a pre-emptive strike, the District Attorney’s office filed charges against Heyman and 24 other protestors last June 23. Heyman was charged with obstructing justice and failing to comply with a police officer’s order. The other 24 were charged with failing to disperse and interfering with business. Three days later, the accused and injured filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the City of Oakland and the Oakland Police Dept.

During the last year, unions all over the world wrote protest letters to the city. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights condemned the Oakland police tactics. Numerous rallies turned out hundreds in support of the “Oakland 25.”

In dropping the charges against the 25, Dunger said the police had changed policies on the use of force and demonstrators had changed to “peaceful” tactics, according to the *Oakland Tribune*. The federal lawsuit will continue, lawyers for the plaintiffs said.

The arrest of Heyman and the other 24 protestors echoed the attacks on free speech and union rights in the Charleston Five case. And as in that case, broad exercise of those rights helped preserve them.

“I’m thankful for all the support from dockworkers’ unions around the world,” Heyman said. “Their efforts helped us win this victory for the entire labor movement.”

—Tom Price



Anti-war demonstrators marched to the Port of Oakland on the one-year anniversary of the protest that ended with police shooting demonstrators and ILWU longshore workers.



# WASHINGTON REPORT

## ILWU storms Capitol Hill

By Lindsay McLaughlin  
ILWU Legislative Director

During the last week in April 2004, ILWU President James Spinoso, the other Titled Officers and the Coast Committee led 45 rank-and-file members in Washington, D.C. at the 2004 ILWU Legislative Conference. The mission of the Conference was to build political power, to recruit grassroots activists to influence the direction of the country and to move the political debate in on Capitol Hill. The ILWU delegates visited more than 60 members of Congress to discuss four key issues:

- Implementing real port security, including a program to inspect empty containers;
- Defeating the Central American Free Trade Agreement and the subsequent Free Trade Agreement of the Americas;
- Combating the Bush administration's support for outsourcing American jobs; and
- Passing the Employee Free Choice Act to guarantee workers have the right to organize free of the debilitating obstacles employers now raise.

President Spinoso set the tone of the conference on the opening night. "We will work hard, we will make progress, and we will let Capitol Hill know that the ILWU is here," Spinoso said. "We all know, however, that to make real progress for working families we are going to have to go home, get involved and get George Bush out of office."

This was fifth and largest ILWU legislative conference—and the first to include such a full representation of union members. Delegates from the warehouse division, the IBU and a security guards' local joined those from the longshore division.

"We sent a diversity of members both from Local 142 and the mainland," Vice President Wesley Furtado said. "We shared our issues and concerns and it worked well."

An impressive list of speakers addressed the ILWU delegates, including House Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA); Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-MA); Rep. Robert Matsui (D-CA); Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA); John Kerry's deputy political campaign director, David Billy; Presidential candidate Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), and Rep. George Miller (D-CA), chair of the Democratic Caucus and the highest ranking Democrat on the House Labor Committee.

"Our job this year is to throw

George Bush out of town," Miller said, "It is crunch time. There has never been a more dangerous time in our history, with this administration destroying the wage base, gutting protections for workers, shipping jobs overseas, cutting health care benefits and undermining pensions. We have to take the fight to them—like you did during the longshore lockout in 2002."

Below is a synopsis of ILWU's key lobbying issues:

### PORT SECURITY

The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2004 includes a provision requiring the Dept. of Homeland Security to study the practices and protocols for empty containers at U.S. ports. Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) wants empty containers entering a port facility to be inspected.

"Empty containers pose a threat today," he said. "I am concerned that by waiting for a report and the publication of recommendations on how to improve handling of empty containers, we will provide an open window of opportunity for those who seek to do us harm."

Inouye vowed to send a letter to Homeland Security signed by as many of his colleagues as possible requesting a clarification of the policy on empty containers. The ILWU agrees with Sen. Inouye and contends that all containers should get some type of security check, which should include inspecting container seals and opening containers marked "empty" to ensure they do not contain contraband, terrorist weapons or even people.

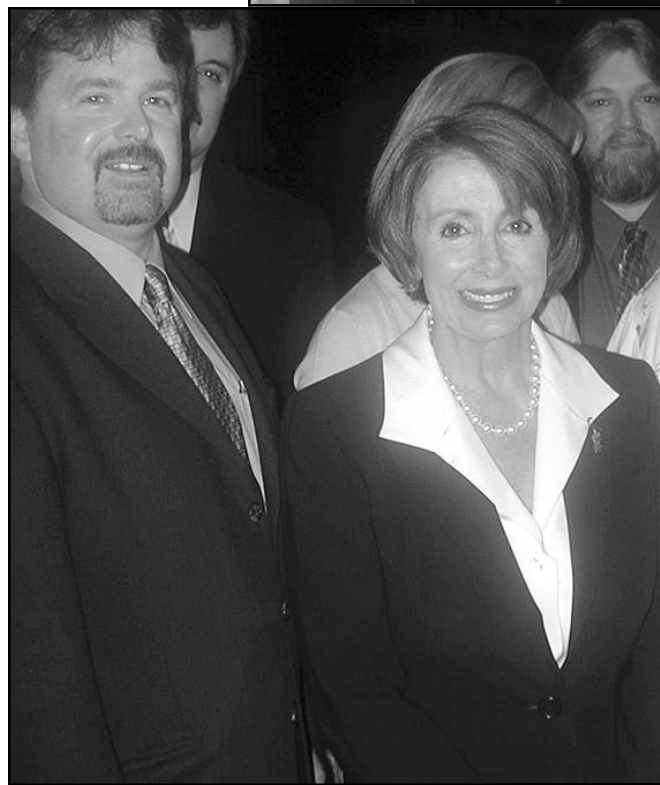
Rep. Bob Filner is working on a similar letter to Homeland Security from members of the House of Representatives. ILWU delegates asked members to sign on.

Additionally, ILWU delegates gave Congress members fact sheets on the ILWU's more comprehensive port security policy, which includes the enforcement of current regulations regarding the checks of seals. (The explosion that rocked the Los Angeles TraPac terminal while the ILWU was lobbying in D.C. underscored the urgency of this concern. See pages 2 and 3.)

Terminal operators have lobbied their friends in the Bush Administration to ensure seals would not be inspected when containers enter by sea. The terminal operators say we can rely on the Chinese, Indonesian, and other governments to perform security checks on containers prior to their



TOP (Left to right) Dawn Des Brisay, Mary Winzig, Rep. Pete DeFazio (D-OR), Jeff Smith;



MIDDLE Kevin Clark with House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Jim Daw in the background;

BOTTOM: Rep. Neil Ambercrombie (D-HI) addresses the ILWU delegation.

Russ Miyashiro

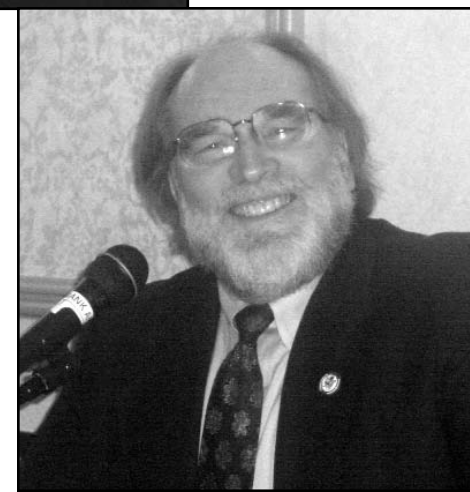
voyage to America. Containers from abroad must have a security check by American clerks after they have been off-loaded.

The ILWU fact sheet included a plea for Congress to fund port security. Prior to this year, the Bush Administration's budget proposed nothing for port security. This year the Administration proposed \$46 million for port security nationwide. The U. S. Coast Guard has estimated that it would take \$7.4 billion to adequately secure U.S. ports.

### CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

ILWU delegates lobbied to defeat the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). They asked members of Congress to commit to vote against the agreement. CAFTA is a trade agreement negotiated between the United States and five Central American countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. The Administration subsequently negotiated a similar agreement to include the Dominican Republic in CAFTA.

ILWU delegates explained why Congress should vote down this free trade agreement. First and foremost, CAFTA directly threatens ILWU jobs. CAFTA places 146,000 sugar producing, refining and shipping jobs in jeopardy—many of them good union jobs. At least 1,000 ILWU jobs tied to the sugar industry could be lost if CAFTA goes into effect. ILWU sugar jobs would be the first to go, because the Hawaii sugar industry must pay additional transportation costs to the West Coast for refining. Other ILWU agricultural jobs may also be in jeopardy if CAFTA is passed. The agree-



ment will eliminate the tariff on fresh pineapples from Costa Rica where labor standards do not come close to meeting the high standards set in Hawaii where ILWU members work.

Secondly CAFTA undermines worker rights. It contains no meaningful labor and environmental standards. It only encourages countries to enforce their own laws. In Central America, where laws fall far below international standards and governments and employers actively oppose unions, this agreement will encourage rampant workers' rights violations to continue.

CAFTA will clear the way for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) that would include every country in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, except Cuba. The FTAA, as currently written, would destroy jobs, encourage privatization, increase corporate control and worsen inequality throughout the hemisphere.

The ILWU delegates told members of Congress there are better ways to trade with other countries. A fair trade agreement would include:

### ILWU'S RANK-AND-FILE LOBBYISTS

Cager Clabaugh (longshore Local 4) • Jeni McKenzie, Mary Winzig (warehouse, retail and allied Local 5) • Richard Sierras (warehouse Local 6) • Jeff Smith, Jim Daw (longshore Local 8) • Henry Graham, Lawrence Thibeaux, Debbie Dean (longshore Local 10) • Mike Mitre, Joe Radisich, Cathy Familathe, Mike Ponce, Richard Flores, Julie WhiteBrady (longshore Local 13) • Everett Burdan (warehouse Local 17) • Herald Ugles, John Munson, Paul Pemberton (longshore Local 19) • Jeff Davis (longshore Local 21) • Scott Mason (Local 23) • Max Vekich (longshore Local 24) • Mary Dutra (longshore/clerks/foremen's Local 29) • Trinidad Esquivel III (mine and mineral processing Local 30) • Eddie Gutierrez (marine clerks Local 34) • Dawn Des Brisay, Kevin Clark, Dave Strader (marine clerks Local 40) • Warren Shelton (longshore Local 46) • Michael Forbes (longshore Local 51) • John Fageaux, Terry Fell (Local 63OCU) • Peter Peyton, Adrian Diaz, Emily Noceti, Tony Pomella (clerks Local 63) • Michael Terry, David Terry (watchmen's Local 75) • Leonard Thompson (IBU) • Donna Domingo, Clayton Dela Cruz, Nathan Lum, Wallace Ishibashi, Jr., Martin Jensen/Teddy Espeleta (Local 142) • Carl Norman, Pete Hendrickson, Pete Danelski (Alaska Longshore Division)



TOP Washington delegation with Sen. Maria Cantwell. (Back, left to right) Paul Pemberton, Willie Adams, Max Vekich, Sen. Cantwell, John Munson, Cager Clabaugh, Michael Forbes, Scott Mason (Front, left to right) Joe Wenzl, Jeff Davis

BOTTOM Southern California delegates (left to right) Emily Noceti, Julie Brady and Cathy Familathe share a laugh.



WASHINGTON REPORT Continued

- Respect for core workers' rights, the environment and human rights;
- Protection for industries hit by sudden import surges and unfair trade practices;
- Regulation of big business to protect consumers, workers and the environment;
- Protection from privatization and support for such key public services as health care, education and utilities;
- A fair system of immigration rules that protects the rights of all immigrant workers;
- Sound financial regulation, debt relief and development assistance for poor countries so they can grow and invest in human needs; and
- Meaningful access to and input on trade negotiations and dispute settlement processes for workers and the public.

LABOR STANDARDS

The ILWU delegates arrived in town shortly after the Bush administration issued final rules that would take overtime pay away from thousands of working Americans. The Bush rule contains proposals that weaken the overtime eligibility rules and deny overtime pay to workers earning as little as \$23,660.

Many ILWU delegates attended a House Education and Workforce Committee hearing to learn more about the Bush efforts to take away overtime pay from American workers. Delegates learned that Bush was lying when he denied the new rules would affect workers making between \$23,000 and \$100,000. The adminis-

tration denied overtime to claims adjusters, computer network professionals, Internet workers, database administrators, journalists, mortgage loan officers, funeral directors and embalmers. Additionally, the administration would deny overtime to any worker designated as a "team leader."

ILWU delegates lobbied for an amendment to the rules proposed by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-SD) that would retroactively repeal any portion of the final Bush overtime regulation that restricts eligibility. If the administration truly believes its new rules do not strip workers of overtime rights, it should have no reason to oppose the Harkin amendment. The Harkin amendment would not repeal any portion of the final regulation that expands coverage for low-income workers.

Shortly after the delegates left the Conference, the Senate considered the Harkin amendment and passed it with 52 votes. Four Republicans crossed the aisle to vote with Democrats to protect overtime pay, including Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). The ILWU delegates had lobbied her on this issue.

"We have to be relentless in our efforts to keep our issues in front of those who represent us in Congress," Alaska delegate Pete Hendrickson said.

Besides urging protection for overtime rights, the delegates lobbied for legislation strengthening workers' right to organize, the Employee Free Choice Act, introduced by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), and H.R. 3619 introduced by Rep. George Miller. (See The Dispatcher, October 2003.)

Some 45 million U.S. workers say

they would form a union today if given the chance. They want to improve their jobs, gain health care, make sure their jobs are secure and have a say in their working conditions. All across America, workers are lied to, harassed, threatened, coerced, interrogated, disciplined and even fired when they try to exercise their legal right to form a union.

The National Labor Relations Act provides a drawn-out election process that gives employers plenty of opportunity for these abuses, and provides no meaningful penalties for scofflaw employers. The new legislation would make card-check the primary tool for winning union recognition. Workers could have a union if a majority in their shop signed union authorization cards. The new bill would also punish employers for interfering with workers' right to organize.

Joe Radisich, president of the Southern California District Council, said that before he left Los Angeles, the AFL-CIO asked the ILWU to talk to Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA) about the Employee Free Choice Act. Before the ILWU met with her, she had refused to co-sponsor the legislation.

"We made it very clear how important it was and that we needed her to sign it or we would be very disappointed," Radisich said. Before the ILWU left Washington, D.C., Rep. Harman signed on as a co-sponsor of the legislation. "That was the highlight of my week," Radisich said. Rep. Ellen Taucher (D-CA) became a co-sponsor during the week of the ILWU legislative conference.

OUTSOURCING

Lastly, ILWU delegates told Congress they need to adopt policies to promote American jobs and to fight the Bush administration's support for outsourcing. Bush reported to

Congress that the movement of factory jobs and white-collar work to other countries is part of a positive transformation that will enrich the U.S. economy over time, even if it causes short-term pain and dislocation. Bush's chief economic advisor, N. Gregory Mankiv, testified before Congress and supported Bush's position that shifting jobs overseas is a good thing for America.

"Outsourcing is just a new way of doing international trade," he said. "More things are tradable than were tradable in the past. And that's a good thing."

The first thing our government could do to stem the flight of jobs from the U.S. is pass a comprehensive, national, single-payer health care program. Our inefficient health care system adds 30 to 35 percent to the cost of doing business and makes U.S. products and services uncompetitive with the economies of both developing and developed nations. Health care reform is long overdue and, if we are to compete effectively in the global economy, it is imperative that the problem of sky-high health care cost be fixed.

Presidential candidate John Kerry has vowed to get rid of tax breaks for companies that take jobs out of the U.S. Through tax deferral, foreign tax credits and other tax breaks, multinational corporations not only avoid U.S. taxes on their off-shore operations, but they get tax subsidies to create jobs overseas. These tax policies must be replaced by policies that focus on job creation here and tax penalties for shipping jobs overseas.

BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

When ILWU delegates travel to Washington, D.C., they work harder than any other group of trade unionists anywhere. But we will have limited influence unless we change the politicians in the United States. That means contributing money to the Political Action Fund and manpower for the ILWU program to send rank-and-file ILWU members to states where ILWU-endorsed Presidential candidate John Kerry is locked in a competitive race with the current occupant of the White House.

"We need to raise a million dollars to help those who want to help working families," said International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. "We have got to give money and we have got to put out more political energy than we have ever put out in our lifetime to change the course of history."

The conference itself was also a step in building the unity the ILWU will need to face the fight ahead.

"Seeing all the sectors of the union, from pineapple to longshore to Powell's Books, lobbying together on our issues made the conference a huge success," said International Vice President Bob McEllrath.

The ILWU Political Action Fund

The ILWU Political Action Fund has a goal of raising more than \$500,000 for the union's work on the November 2004 elections and for contributions to pro-worker candidates' campaigns. The International officers and the Coast Committee are asking all members to donate \$50 each to the fund. All contributions are voluntary, are not part of your union dues or a condition of union membership. You can give more or less than the officers suggest—all contributions are valued—and there are no reprisals for giving less or not participating in the union's political activities. Contributions to the ILWU Political Action Fund are not tax deductible.

To satisfy federal election laws, please include with your check your name, address, occupation and employer. The ILWU International wants you to list your local number and registration number to track participation rates. Retirees are not eligible to donate to the ILWU PAF. They should make donations to the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association or other pensioner groups.

Donations should be sent to:

ILWU-PAF  
1188 Franklin St., 4th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Checks should be payable to: ILWU-PAF.



## Wages in America

# The rich get richer and the rest get less

By Jack Rasmus

**D**o you feel like you're working harder, longer hours, and still can't keep up with rising taxes, gasoline prices, utility bills, ballooning medical expenses and the accelerating cost of paying for your kids' education?

Well, you're not alone. You're in good company. The company of tens of millions of American workers today on the same economic treadmill, having to walk faster and faster just to stay in the same place, or unable even to keep up with the pace due to unemployment, loss of benefits or wage cuts.

How would you like to be making \$200,000 a year today after 25 years on the job? Well, if you started with the pay of an average worker 25 years ago that's what you'd be making today—if you got the same kind of raises that CEOs of American companies got for the past 25 years. The average compensation of a CEO in 1980 was about 40 times that of the average worker in his company. Today it is more than 500 times. If your pay had kept pace with his, you would be making more than \$200,000 this year. Of course, that didn't happen, did it? So let's see what actually did happen to the average American worker's pay over the past 25 years of the Reagan-Bush economic regime.

### STAGNATING WORKERS' WAGES

In 1979 the American worker's average hourly wage was equal to \$15.91 (adjusted for inflation in 2001 dollars). By 1989 it had reached only \$16.63 per hour. That's a gain of only 7 cents a year for the entire Reagan decade.

But wait, things get worse. By 1995 it had risen to only \$16.71, showing virtually no gain whatsoever over the six years between 1989 and 1995. During the great "boom years" between 1995 and 2000 it rose briefly to \$18.33 per hour. In other words, from 1979 to 2000, even before the most recent Bush recession, the American worker's average wages increased on average only 11.5 cents per hour per year. Nearly all of that came in the five so-called boom years of 1995-2000, and most of that was lost once again in the last three years. And that includes all workers, even those with college degrees.

The picture is worse for workers who had no college degree. That's more than 100 million workers, or 72.1 percent of the workforce. For them there was no boom of 1995-2000 whatsoever. Their average real hourly wages were less at the end of 2000 than they were in 1979. And since 2000 their wages have continued to slide further.

### THE GREAT PRODUCTIVITY SWINDLE

Management is always quick to say in contract negotiations, "Give us more productivity and we can afford to give you a bigger raise." But this has been a false promise from 1979 to 2000, and an even bigger lie under George Bush II.

With 1992 as base year, productivity was at 82.2 in 1979. It grew to 94.2 by 1989 and 116.6 by the year 2000. In the past year, moreover, it has exploded, putting it over 120. That's a nearly 40 percent increase since Ronald Reagan took office nearly 25 years ago.

The 100 million American workers without college degrees, whose



real take-home pay today is less than it was 25 years ago, certainly can't be said to have shared in that 40 percent productivity gain. And the other 20 million or so with college degrees whose pay rose modestly at best certainly shared in very little of it.

So who got all the money?

### CEOS & EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Considering just the period from 1989 to the present yields an obscene result. The median executive salary (cash pay and bonuses) of American CEOs rose by 79 percent from 1989 to 2000—and has continued to accelerate right through the current Bush II recession. And that's only the median. The average CEO cash and direct compensation growth is even higher than 79 percent.

But that's only CEO wage or "cash" compensation. How about management incentives, stock options exercised, the value of new stock grants, special supplemental pensions, etc.? The growth of this "direct compensation" for CEOs from 1989 to 2000 was no less than 342 percent, 212 percent of which occurred in the boom years of the late 1990s.

Put in real money terms, the median pay for an American CEO was \$2,436,000 in 1989 and \$10,775,000 by 2000.

The growth in CEO compensation has been unstoppable, and is accelerating faster every year. In 1965, CEO pay was 26 times that of their average worker. In 1980, as noted, it was 40 times. In 1989, it was 72 times. In 1999 it had risen to 310 times, and today it has reached 500 times.

The international comparisons are also interesting. Where the American worker today earns only about a third more than the average wage of the worker in 13 other industrialized countries, the American CEO earns 300 percent, or three times, as much as his CEO counterparts in those same countries. No average CEO compensation in any of the other 13 countries is equal to even half that of the typical American CEOs. For example, the ratio of CEO to average worker's pay ranges from a low of around 10 to 1 for Japan and Switzerland to a high of around 25 to 1 in the UK and Canada.

As one source has put it, "In 2000 a CEO earned more in one workday [there are 260 in a year] than what the

average worker earned in 52 weeks. In 1965, by contrast, it took a CEO two weeks to earn a worker's annual pay".

### THE FALLING MINIMUM WAGE

One of the more shameful legacies of the past decades has been what has been allowed to happen to American workers at the lower end of the earnings spectrum. While the outsourcing and offshoring of union jobs with high pay and good benefits has thinned the ranks of top-end workers, those at the lower end have been suffering their own severe hardship.

We are talking here about more than 10 million American workers who earn the minimum wage. (Contrary to corporate propaganda, only 28 percent of those getting paid minimum wage are teenagers. Most are single women or men who head households.) The minimum wage in America reached its high point in terms of real buying power in the late 1960s, and thereafter went into a deep and steady free fall, declining more than 29 percent in buying power during the 1980s. In the early and mid 1990s the decline was slowed somewhat by modest increases in the minimum wage legislated by Congress, but it has accelerated again since the last increase in the federal minimum wage was given in 1996, now almost a decade ago.

In terms of 2001 dollars, the minimum wage in 1979 was worth \$6.55. It fell to \$4.62 in 1989, rose modestly in the early and mid-1990s, but in 2003 was equivalent to only \$4.94 an hour. The minimum wage is 21.4 percent less today than it was in 1979.

### WORKING LONGER AND HARDER

The overall picture is abundantly clear: real average hourly wages of more than 100 million American workers are less today than 25 years ago; real wages of college-educated workers have risen only modestly in the late 1990s and fallen since under Bush II, and real wages of the 10 million lowest paid workers have declined more than 21 percent.

Given this, one might ask how has the American worker and his or her family survived the last quarter century under Reagan and Bush? The answer is by working longer hours—individually and as a family unit—and by taking on more and more household debt—both instead of

hourly wage gains.

Let's look at hours worked: The American worker not only works more hours in a year than his counterpart in other industrialized nations, but is the only worker in the 13 major industrialized countries whose hours worked per year have actually increased since 1979. Workers in all the other industrialized countries have enjoyed an actual decrease in their total hours worked per year in a comparable period.

For example, there are approximately 2,080 hours of work in a year. In 1979 the American worker individually worked 1,905 hours out of the possible 2,080. But by 1998 he or she was now working 1,966 hours a year. That's an increase of 61 hours. In contrast, a worker in Germany saw his or her working hours decline from 1,764 to 1,562, a worker in France went from 1,813 to 1,634, and in Japan a worker went from 1,821 to 1,737. The picture is similar in all 13 industrialized countries recently surveyed.

As a family unit, while real wages of male workers as heads of households in the U.S. have fallen, the American family has worked longer hours by adding more family members to the workforce. Since 1973 this increase in family average hours worked is the equivalent of adding four months of work in a year to the 2,080 hours. Wives in working families have assumed the major share of this increase in total family hours worked, contributing more than 500 additional hours of work per year. But the male worker in the family has also worked more overtime hours, and both husbands and wives have taken on second part-time jobs as well. All three developments add up to the five additional months of work American workers' families now work in order to offset declining hourly wages and just to make ends meet.

If it were not for working these longer hours, or adding record amounts of family debt (installment, mortgage, student loan, etc), the standard of living of the American worker and his family would have certainly collapsed.

### WHAT GEORGE BUSH AND FRIENDS WANT IN A SECOND TERM

Given these trends of longer hours worked, it is not surprising that Bush and corporate America are intent today on reducing overtime pay. After making sure hourly wages haven't risen for more than two decades, Bush and friends have recently implemented new rules to cut overtime pay for 8 million workers. Their other wage strategies include preventing any increase in the minimum wage; continuing pressure to make workers pay more for health insurance premiums, co-pays and deductibles; and promoting more offshoring of American jobs. Finally, of importance in particular to longshore workers, there's the additional Bush goal of eliminating industry-wide union contracts and replacing them with local agreements. If Bush gets re-elected, expect a new Bush-corporate offensive on all these fronts.

*Jack Rasmus is the chair of the San Francisco Bay Area local chapter 3 of the National Writers Union, UAW 1981, AFL-CIO, and a long-time member of the Dramatists Guild. Rasmus has a Ph.D. in Political Economy.*

# Federal lawsuit filed to overturn the Miami Model

by Tom Price

The National Lawyers Guild joined anti-FTAA activists to file a federal lawsuit March 25 in an attempt to turn back new, preemptively violent police tactics like the ones used in Miami, Florida last year. In that Nov. 17-21 demonstration several ILWU members joined tens of thousands protesting the Free Trade Area of the Americas trade deal. Peaceful marchers, including pensioners and widows, faced some of the most vigorous police repression in a generation as thousands were corralled, detained or falsely arrested. Prosecutors have charged 231 demonstrators, 28 with felonies.

Miami's mayor, Manuel Diaz, called the tactics "a model for homeland defense." Others see a new trend of forcing unfair trade deals down citizens' throats at gunpoint.

The suit "is brought to challenge the mass false arrests of, and unreasonable force against, lawful demonstrators," according to the complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Miami. "Law enforcement coordinated an all-out assault on the First Amendment, engaging in widespread political profiling, and swept the streets of anyone viewed as being an anti-FTAA activist, effectively suspending the Fourth Amendment for 10 days."

Real suffering lies beneath the formal language of the complaint. Police hurled Bentley Killmon, a 71-year-old retired member of the Airline Pilots Assn. and a Korean War vet, to the ground in an extremely brutal manner. He is the lead plaintiff. Videographer Carl Kesser, suffered near-fatal injuries when police shot him with a beanbag that lodged in his skull. According to the Steelworkers Union, police slammed the elderly wife of a retiree from Grantsville, Utah face down and held guns on her after she verbally protested the brutal treatment of another demonstrator.

During one of the Dec. 11 arrest hearings Judge Richard Margolius asked the state's attorney how many cops had been arrested. "None," the prosecutor replied.

"That's a pretty sad commentary, from what I saw," the judge said. Margolius said he witnessed at least 20 police felonies on the streets during the demonstrations.

Local and federal authorities dubbed police tactics the "Miami Model" because it should be a model for future demonstrations, according to Robert Ross, attorney for the plaintiffs.

"This is a very dangerous precedent. It may happen to other groups," Ross said. "What we do in this suit will affect all forms of dissent in the future."

The suit is an attempt to stop this tactic before it spreads to other cities. ILWU Local 23's Gail Ross was there and expressed her fears for American civil liberties.

"Every time a crowd gathers over something they don't like they're going to start using bigger tactics and more guns, literally and figuratively, and if we give away these rights to gather in the streets they will keep chipping away our civil rights," she said. "They will keep using 'terrorism,' and in our fear we think 'maybe they're right, maybe we do need all these protections,' and before we know it all our civil rights are gone."

The federal assistance to the police—\$8.5 million out of the Iraq war budget—paid for weapons and communications. Federal authorities displayed an unprecedented level of participation in domestic civil repression. Homeland Security and the Justice Dept. actively assisted in the planning and in the interrogation of people arrested. For these reasons,



Bette Lee

Worplace hazard? Police deliberately shot reporters at close range during last year's FTAA protest in Miami.

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge were included as defendants in the suit. The suit also charges the City of Miami, its mayor and police chief, the county and various other municipal entities.

Activists and the NLG filed the suit under federal Title 42 U.S. Code, Section 1983. That law is the modern version of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, one of the first civil rights laws. Its purpose was to secure the rights of recently freed slaves and allow federal court the authority to enforce those rights and assess criminal penalties for violation. Unfortunately, the modern version lacks criminal penalties.

Besides monetary compensation for the injuries and for punitive damages,

the lawsuit also seeks to legally prohibit the Miami model of preemptively and violently restricting free speech.

"We are trying to enjoin practices and procedures that have been implemented at these large demonstrations, the use of arrest without probable cause as a crowd management tool," Robert Ross said.

If approved by the countries involved, FTAA would extend the disastrous NAFTA scheme to the whole hemisphere. Workers have opposed the FTAA and other corporate trade pacts because they tend to drive wages down and impose corporate control over local economies. Like NAFTA, FTAA allows for corporate privatization of another country's public facilities

and allows foreign corporations to sue to overturn domestic laws that interfere with profits.

As we go to press, the suit is in the paper-serving stage. Plaintiff Killmon will undergo arthroscopic surgery on the shoulder that police injured during his arrest. Videographer Kesser will sue separately for damages. Months after the demo Gail Ross still recalls it with considerable passion:

"I was totally blown away with what I saw there," she said. "I felt I was in an occupied country. That's what it looked like on the streets. The police truly thought they could get away with whatever they wanted. They thought they were accountable to no one."

## Labor responds to 'Miami Model'

The AFL-CIO, its member unions and hundreds of workers spent months organizing anti-FTAA protests last year in Miami. After working out march routes and permits with the police, thousands of unionists converged on Miami Nov. 17-21 for a perfectly legal expression of their right to dissent.

But it was not to be. On the way in unionists were blocked by police. Later police attacked workers on permitted parade routes. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney witnessed police violence personally, and was hopping mad.

"The Miami police violated virtually every agreement," he said in a Nov. 26, 2003 press release. "They blocked access to the rally and march for busses and individuals; deployed tanks and scores of officers in riot gear in front of the rally entrance; denied march organizers access to water, signs, and toilets; and pointed guns and verbally abused those seeking guidance from the police. Peaceful protestors were swept up in police cordons, shot at with rubber bullets and pepper spray, arrested and mistreated while in police custody. The level of police presence and their aggressive stance was leagues beyond what was warranted."

Sweeney wrote to Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft Dec. 3 asking for independent investigations into police conduct. He demanded prosecution of those responsible, the resignation of Miami Police Chief John Timoney, the dropping of all charges against peaceful protestors and assurances such violations would never again occur.

United Steelworkers of America President Leo Gerard fired off a letter Nov. 24 to key Congressional leaders asking for the firing of Miami Police Chief John Timoney and the dropping of all charges against demonstrators.

"It is condemnable enough that a massive police state was created to prevent American citizens from directly petitioning FTAA negotiators for redress of their grievances," he wrote. "It is doubly condemnable that nearly \$9 million of federal funds designated for the reconstruction of Iraq were used toward this despicable purpose. How

can we hope to build democracy in Iraq while using massive force to dismantle it here at home?"

Gerard also called for a Congressional investigation into the use of federal money for police violence. "To do less would be to endorse homeland repression in the name of homeland security," he said.

Several unions, including SEIU and UNITE, also called for a Congressional investigation into the police mismanagement.

The USWA is trying to make sure the issue, especially Police Chief Timoney's role in the violent repression, remains visible.

"We plan on keeping Timoney from getting future jobs, like at the Democratic National Convention in Boston this summer," said USWA spokesman Gary Hubbard. "We have so far kept it blocked."

Since then union workers have joined the National Lawyers Guild lawsuit and the AFL-CIO has cooperated with attorneys in gathering evidence for future lawsuits. AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka testified on police misconduct before the Miami local civilian investigative panels. He laid the responsibility for the violence on police leaders at a Dec. 16, 2003 hearing.

"I blame top police officials for failing to develop a clear plan for guaranteeing public safety while respecting our rights," Trumka said. "I blame police management for putting more effort into fomenting needless fear and hysteria than they did into providing training, ensuring coordination and building morale for their hard-working officers."

At another hearing on March 1 Trumka refuted a prior Miami Police Dept. three-hour presentation, complete with a slickly produced video, that claimed the AFL-CIO, in cohorts with "anarchists," was responsible for the violence.

"We are still preparing and gathering evidence for a lawsuit," AFL-CIO campaign coordinator Debbie Dion told *The Dispatcher*. "We're keeping the pressure and heat on the best we can."

—Tom Price

# The ‘Old Left’ and the union: Jack Olsen

Introduction by Harvey Schwartz

**T**his is the second in a series featuring ILWU veterans of the “Old Left.” Much has been published about the government’s many failed attempts to prove that Harry Bridges was a Communist Party (CP) member. Far less has been written about people like Jack Olsen, the subject of this month’s article, who was a CP activist in the union’s early days.

Jack Olsen worked on the San Francisco waterfront in the 1930s. During the next decade he served Local 6 as a business agent and as publicity and education director. Here he highlights the Old Left’s contributions to the ILWU and gives us a rare inside view of how the CP operated within American unions at the time and why and how it was effective in changing the political landscape and inspiring young union idealists. Here he also emphasizes how the CP fought for Black workers before World War II.

In the early 1950s the employers excluded Olsen from warehouse jobs because of his politics. Under severe duress at the time, Local 6 was unable to overcome this, despite the ILWU’s tradition of sheltering victims of discrimination. Olsen found employment as a Typographical Union Local 21 printer. In 1974 he became the first director of Labor Studies at the City College of San Francisco.

Jack Olsen was married to the celebrated author Tillie Olsen. He passed away in 1989. I interviewed him in San Francisco in 1982 under the original ILWU-U.C. Berkeley oral history project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Thanks to Oscar Berland and Bill Pieper for their suggestions.

JACK OLSEN

Edited by Harvey Schwartz,  
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

**W**hen I was one year old I was brought to the U.S. from Russia, where I was born in 1911. Like most Russian Jewish immigrants of that time, my parents came here to escape the increase of anti-Semitism and oppression in Czarist Russia flowing out of the 1905 Revolution. When that first Russian uprising was defeated, the Czar’s government made the Jews the scapegoat for its problems.

My parents settled in New Jersey, but soon moved to Philadelphia where my father became the recording secretary of the local broom and brush makers’ union. Like many people of his generation, my father was excited by the Russian Revolution of 1917. He was ambivalent, because he was not a revolutionary. But he was pleased that the Czar had been overthrown. He used to say the Russian Revolution showed that working people could become the heads of governments.

Around 1920 we moved to Alden, a little town in upstate New York. My father got involved in the famous Sacco and Vanzetti case. That was my first introduction to radical politics. Sacco and Vanzetti were Italian-born anarchists who were accused of murder in Massachusetts in 1920. They were executed seven years later.

The evidence against Sacco and Vanzetti was so weak that they appeared to be the victims of political persecution. As a high school student in Alden I attended Sacco and Vanzetti meetings through my father’s contacts with radical Jewish workers’ clubs. I used to circulate petitions to free the two men.

In 1928 we came out to Los Angeles. Times were already bad in rural New York, although this was still before the big crash. In ’29, of course, the stock market crash hit and the Great Depression started. That killed whatever personal dreams I had. I’d planned to go to college, but my father was out of work. That’s when I got active in the Communist movement.

I got swept up in the tremendous Communist Party (CP)-led demonstrations of the unemployed

that occurred in big cities across the country on March 6, 1930. Those were the first mass demonstrations of the Depression. Through my father I met a number of L.A. radicals, joined the CP’s Young Communist League (YCL) and set out to make a revolution in the U.S.

For years I’ve been called Olsen, but my real name is Olshanky. That’s because the L.A. Police Department’s “Red Squad” changed my name on March 6. Another YCL kid and I were walking to the unemployed demonstration in L.A. We had cardboard banners underneath our shirts. The police spotted the bulges and arrested us.

Captain William F. (“Red”) Hynes, who headed the Red Squad and became infamous in history, said to me, “What’s a nice kid like you doing associating with these Reds?” I stammered, “I got a right to be here.” He asked, “What’s your name?” I mumbled, “Olshansky. He said, “Did you say Olsen?” I answered, “Yeah.” Then the kid with me poked me in the ribs. So that’s how I got the name Olsen.

The only job I got in L.A. was shipping clerk at a Woolworth’s store. I made \$15 for a six-day week, 10 hours a day, and the job only lasted through Christmas. I decided I couldn’t help my parents in L.A. I figured I might as well see if I could do better someplace else. So in 1930 I took off and came up to San Francisco.

I liked the kind of people I met in the Communist movement up here. The L.A. movement I knew was concentrated in the Jewish enclave at Boyle Heights. The people there had come from big cities like New York and Chicago, and I was a country boy. I felt more at home with the seamen and the unemployed kids I met in San Francisco. Since I was fairly well dressed, which counted then, I managed to pick up odd jobs. I worked a little as a dishwasher and truck driver. Sometimes I even got a few days on the waterfront. None of this was enough to make a living, but I did better than most.

In 1932 I was elected state secretary of the YCL by the CP State Committee. I’d like to say this was because I was a brilliant guy, but actually the movement, which was growing, grabbed anybody who was energetic and willing. I’m denigrating it a little. I was a bit more vocal than some and had done a lit-

tle more reading.

State secretary was supposed to be a full-time job. The YCL made a distinction between full-timers and everybody else by saying, “You’re a paid functionary.” I was entitled to \$5 a week, but the stipulation was that I had to raise the \$5 myself! Sometimes I got it, sometimes I didn’t.

My primary concern as state secretary was building the organization—putting out handbills, holding street meetings, conducting campaigns. There were nine or 10 places around San Francisco where all kinds of radicals and even the Salvation Army held regular street meetings. Depending on how loud a voice you had, how good you were, and what the issue was, you’d get 500, 600, 700 unemployed people standing around to hear you. We’d always pass the hat. If there was anything left after you paid for leaflets you had some money to work with.

The whole thrust of the Communist movement, of course, was in its claim to be the party of the working class. The idea was to provide leadership. Because there was a long history of militancy among longshoremen and seamen, the CP focused much of its energy on the waterfront. You were ashamed of yourself if you didn’t hold at least one street meeting on the waterfront every month, if not every week.

When the 1934 strike came along it was the big thing in every radical’s life. My role was outside support. Whatever we could do as an organization, we did. We went out on the picket lines and helped around the soup kitchen. After the strike, the CP encouraged people like me to get more active in the unions.

Lots of young radicals—many of them Communists, not all of them—got swept up in the feeling that there was a need for union organization. Quite a few helped carry through the longshore union’s “march inland” in warehousing. Some became ILWU leaders. These people came out of a sense of idealism. The new unions systematized hiring, too, and that made it easier for young radicals to get in.

In 1936, when I was 25, I felt I was getting too old for YCL youth activities. I joined the regular CP and decided to see what full-time work I could get. I’d already done quite a bit of casual waterfront work. I recall pushing a hand truck loaded with five or six sacks of coffee that weighed 110 to 120 pounds each. The docks were not well maintained, and you were always hitting ruts and bumps. You’d tear your guts up trying to keep the load from getting dumped.

By this time I knew my way around the warehouse local hiring hall. I got dispatched to a job at U.S. Steel, stayed a year and got my book as a full union member. In late 1937 or ’38 U.S. Steel moved off the waterfront. I decided to switch jobs and got on at Merchants Ice and Cold Storage. Merchants was hard physical work, but I was young and didn’t mind. What I also didn’t mind was working in the freezers, which used to bother a lot of guys so much they wouldn’t take jobs in the ice houses.

In those days the CP set up Party clubs on an industry-by-industry basis. There were warehousemen’s, seamen’s and longshoremen’s clubs. Each club had its own officers and its own delegates to the CP



Jack Olsen, 1946



July 7, 1949: The Local 6 Education and Publicity Committee deliberates at its regular daily meeting during that year’s long and costly warehouse strike.

ILWU ORAL HISTORY  
Volume IX

*The ‘Old Left’ and  
Jack Olsen  
and edited by*



# Black Olsen, activist and educator



county committee, a literature agent and an education director. In warehouse we had clubs on both sides of San Francisco Bay. They used to meet and first take up political issues like the anti-fascist cause in the Spanish Civil War, the current election campaign or an ongoing legal defense case.

Second, there was always discussion of functioning in the union. Did we have the strength to introduce a resolution? What should our demands be when our union contracts expired? The Communist groups always considered the question of union leadership. Should any of our people run for a particular spot, like negotiating committee or executive board member? Who should we support for office, whether a Communist or not?

These preliminary discussions were a tremendous help to us when we went to our union meetings. In effect each club functioned as a Communist caucus.

To get things done we tried to get official backing. In the ILWU, which preached democratic unionism, the officers were relatively easy to get access to. Generally there were three or four CP members who were liaisons. We'd go see the president of Local 6, the business agent and the stewards to try to line up support.

There was always strategy to consider. Could we get a resolution that would ultimately go before a general union meeting introduced through the executive board? Could we get one of the officers to sign it so it didn't come just from the Communists? We might draft the resolution so it suited the officials. When it came time for the union meeting, our guys lined up on the floor behind the microphones to speak for the resolution. Or somebody on the officers' platform would speak for it. There were varying approaches.

The ILWU consistently took positions that were left of where other unions stood. I think the Communist clubs made a difference here. The presence of Communists helped put Local 6 miles ahead of the rest of the labor movement in things like opening up to Black members even before World War II. But we also had to think about our limits. For example, had a Communist club come to a meeting and said, "We want an endorsement of the Soviet Union," we would have had our ass ripped off.

I joined the Local 6 Publicity Committee, helped with a big organizing drive at the Lathrop army depot near Stockton in the late 1930s, spoke out at union meetings all the time and got the reputation of being a red-hot. During the major 1938 warehouse lockout in San Francisco I was down at the union hall and out on the picket lines every chance I got. Several CP people felt I ought to bid for leadership. The guys in the ice houses were pressuring me to run too. So in 1939 I ran for business agent and got elected. I took office in 1940.

The first arbitration I had was against the Paris Beauty Supply Company of San Francisco. We'd dispatched a young Black woman and a young Black guy to the place. The employer was a southerner. He didn't want to keep them. His excuse was, "I've got nothing against Black folks. Why, if I could afford to build them separate toilets, I'd be glad to have them working here."

The local put on a lot of pressure against that sort of thing in 1939-1940 and the Communists made an extra effort issue of it. You can point to many things about the Communist movement that aren't so honorable, but its early insistence on racial equality and its idea that Blacks and Whites should unite was one of the most honorable things it did.

I went into the Army in 1944, during World War II, and got discharged in late 1945. The next year the union asked me to become the full-time director of the Local 6 Education and Publicity Department. In 1946 the local had the money for such a program. It had 15,000 members. I'd helped develop the Local 6 publications and done other publicity work before I went into the Army. This was right up my alley.

As Director I was in charge of our monthly *Local 6 Bulletin*, got out press releases and strike publicity, had each division put out its own mimeographed publication, and set up classes, theater groups, sports teams and social activities. This was a job that could have taken two or three more people, but I got a lot of rank-and-file help. By 1948 we had 18,000 members. We were a thriving, jumping local. I worked my ass off, but it was an exciting, fun time.

I was still active in the CP. I don't think I would have gotten the publicity and education job without Party support. The CP was then a pretty powerful influence in Local 6. People used to come to it for election campaign support who were not even members, knowing full well that the 150 or so Communists here in San Francisco played a real role in who got elected. CP support was something everybody went after, including people who were in opposition to the Party.

There was an awful lot of support for the Left in the union up through the Henry Wallace Progressive Party campaign for the American presidency in 1948. The Communists supported Wallace, who ran on a platform that opposed the coming of the Cold War. The Wallace campaign generated a lot of broad enthusiasm in Local 6. We had a committee of 200 and they weren't all Communists. Unfortunately, the support for Wallace disappeared when election day came.

On the heels of the election came the long and costly 1949 Local 6 warehouse strike that had mixed results. The next year Dave Beck, the Teamsters Union president, poured a million dollars into a raid on the local. He was able to lure away some of our business agents and dispatchers. They went on his payroll and led the attack against us, saying we were unpatriotic. Basically the attack was straight red-baiting.

At the beginning of the Teamster raid the guys who went to work for Beck were still not out in the open. They would come to our meetings, which became very stormy, and say that the local should get rid of the Commies. Ironically, some of those guys had supported Wallace earlier on. Of course, because I was a Communist and made no bones about it, and because I was handling publicity and education, I was one of their main targets.

To defend against this, the local leadership suggested that I resign, and I did. The local was beginning to have financial problems anyway. But that was only the beginning. Shortly thereafter these guys, who were still an internal Local 6 group, put out an election handbill. I took it to a typewriter expert who proved that it was typed in the Teamsters Local 860 office. That brought the whole thing out into the open. These guys also put out a leaflet that said, "Who is Olshansky?" It implied that I was a Russian agent of Stalin.

When the crisis came the Black membership of the local was solidly at our side. They knew the job the ILWU had done in opening up to them. Young people like LeRoy King and Curtis McClain came to the forefront. We put LeRoy on as an organizer to try to beat the attack back. When the actual raid started the internal Local 6 group took a hike and established Teamsters Local 12. Then came the campaign to save our houses from being taken over by them.

Immediately after the raid started the Local 6 officers told me, "Get your ass back on the job. We need publicity." We conducted an intensive campaign against the raid with posters and weekly bulletins. In the last analysis the Teamsters were only able to take away 250 San Francisco members. But it was a very turbulent period and when the whole thing was finished, the local was broke. We had to do away with the Publicity and Education Department.

I went back to work after that, but I had a hell of a time getting jobs. I'd walk into a shop and they'd say, "Olsen, we're glad to have you." But there was a rule that an employer could lay you off anytime in your first 90 days. So 24 hours later I'd get laid off. [During the McCarthy era in the early 1950s employers routinely banned political dissidents.] This was also the beginning of the closing of various shops. I couldn't make a living. I had to find work outside of Local 6.

About 1951, '52, I left the CP. I felt the Party had lost its viability as an American working-class force. There was an exodus from the ILWU Party clubs too. This was the period of the start of the disintegration of the entire American Communist movement. It was unable to react properly to events or to provide leadership.

But in the beginning the Communists in the ILWU had been a part of the building of the union, and they had been accepted. They influenced people on the leadership and the union meeting level. Down through the years, too, the ILWU has been a refuge for radicals who were run out of every place else. As a result of the policy of the ILWU to protect everybody regardless of political affiliation, many were able to get work, to stay, and to influence the membership.

Thus the Communists had enough of a presence and enough personal contact to talk to the other workers and bring up issues in the warehouses and shops. They set a tone and they got a lot of support from workers on the job. To me, that's the key to why the ILWU was always a radical organization.



Olsen, second from right, poses with other members of the Local 6 committee that was running a subscription drive for the CP newspaper, the *People's World*, during World War II. They were trying to net 3,000 new subscribers.

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# AROUND THE UNION

## PLASTICS STRIKE BRINGS REAL GAINS

Next time you poke through the shrink-wrap on a package of Maruchan Instant Lunch, stop and think. The guys who made that wrap might've belonged to ILWU warehouse Local 26. They might've been among the 100 gutsy Local 26 members who struck for two weeks in March after American Extrusion Products (AEP) made them a contract offer they had to refuse.

"These members put a lot on the line," said Local 26 President Luisa Gratz, who served as spokesperson for the negotiating committee. "They very courageously stood up for what they thought was right."

Pulling together after years of divisions and apathy, the AEP workers fought off the company's demands for take-backs and scored some modest gains.

The Chino, California branch of multinational AEP makes and ships bags for dry-cleaners and supermarkets, trash bags, industrial-strength wrap for pallets and shrink-wrap for fresh produce and packaged foods. Maruchan is one of its main clients.

The company's modern machines have the packers doing twice as much work as they did when he started 23 years ago, shop steward Jesus Vazquez said. The work is hard, but until recently his co-workers did little to fight the heavy load and low pay.

"We were very disorganized and no one would do anything," he said.

Then new Local 26 Vice President/Business Agent Rick Cortinas came on the scene. A 32-year ILWU veteran, Cortinas had been chief steward at Pacific Coast Recycling before taking over as BA last summer.

Cortinas started meeting with all the shifts. (AEP works people 11a.m. to 11p.m. and 11p.m. to 11a.m., with three days on, four off, four on, three off.) He ran the meetings in Spanish, the first language for some 80 percent of the workers. He brought together workers from shipping and manufacturing, who had no communication

before.

"They began understanding their needs and wants are the same," Cortinas said.

"We went through the contract an article or two at a time," he said. "I advised them to make a paper trail when the supervisors were harassing them, then bring the issue to the stewards. When the supervisors see you doing this, they'll take you seriously."

In January the focus turned to new contract proposals. People wanted more pay, maintenance of health benefits and a pension plan. The members decided to send Vazquez, Shipping and Receiving shop steward Larry Fernandez and Chief Steward Sal Basurto to the negotiating table along with Gratz and Cortinas.

AEP hired a union-busting law firm that was looking for a fight. Talks were scheduled to start Feb. 19, but management stalled till the 24th and didn't come in with a proposal till March 1.

"That offer was a joke," Vazquez said. The company wanted to take away two holidays and impose three pages of management rights, including language that would keep people from calling their stewards. They put only pennies on the wage line.

The next day, all the workers turned out for meetings at the VFW hall near the plant. They voted 99-1 to reject the offer and strike. Local 26 gave management the required 72-hour strike notice.

At 7p.m. March 5, AEP gave their last, best and final offer. Cortinas and the negotiating committee activated the phone tree. By 10:30 p.m. every member who wasn't working had arrived at the plant parking lot. They voted unanimously to start the strike. Shouts broke out.

"What do we want? Respect! When? Now!" they yelled. Everyone who was still working walked off at 11p.m. and joined the line.

The members held that line round the clock at the manufacturing plant and 12 hours a day at shipping. At first the picket teams followed their 12-hour work shifts. Later they

broke down into six-hour segments. With no sidewalks near the plant, they were confined to a 12-foot easement by the side of the road. Management turned sprinklers on the pickets once—unintentionally giving some relief from the hot sun.

When the plant manager drove in and out, the pickets would yell, "More pennies!" but that was as rowdy as they got. No Local 26 members scabbed and no scabs went to work. When people showed up in response to newspaper ads, pickets would explain what was going on, and point out the shop down the road that was hiring.

"We turned them away with kindness," Cortinas said.

Supervisors tried to work the plant, putting in such long hours that two quit from exhaustion. One later admitted to the workers, "Now we know how hard your job is."

ILWU International Organizers Carlos Cordon and Rudy Gutierrez came in to help coordinate the pickets. Teamster truckers honored the lines, which were sanctioned by IBT Joint Council 42 and the San Bernardino County Central Labor Council. LA Labor Community Services helped out by stocking the food bank Local 26 set up for the striking workers.

The employer came back with a new offer March 19. As soon as she had it in hand, Gratz drove to the plant and gathered everyone quickly for a meeting.

AEP had dropped its concession demands, offered a substantial bonus in the first year and better hourly increases in the second and third years. As unanimously as they decided to strike, the members voted to accept the offer and go back to work.

The two-week strike also brought benefits beyond the contract package.

"We are more united now to fight for the things we need," Vazquez said. "We will be more organized for our next contract."

—Marcy Rein

## STRIKE ENDS FOR CANADIAN TUG OFFICERS, TALKS BEGIN FOR LOCAL 400

After an eight-day strike, mediation and the threat of federal legislation, masters, mates and engineers who operate Vancouver-area tugs returned to work April 24 with a tentative three-year agreement. The strike, by 800 members of the Canadian Merchant Service Guild, affected 60 percent of area tugs and cut the number of containership calls to the port by half.

The Guild walked out when the company would not budge on its pay and benefit offers, and no progress had been made on scores of local issues. More than 95 percent of the members voted on the company's last offer, and 95 percent of them turned it down, according to Guild Secretary-Treasurer Ken Herbert. Canadian law requires a separate strike vote, and 88.7 percent voted for the strike.

Negotiations proceeded with the help of a federal mediator.

"There were a number of other issues that were irritants that we weren't successful on," Herbert said. "But once they threw all the money on the table, the mediator threw up his arms and said 'I'm not going to deal with that part of it.'"

Guild members are officers on the tugs ILWU Canada's Marine Section Local 400 members serve on as crew members. They generally bargain with the same employers.

Local 400 members respected the Guild's picket line and ILWU longshore workers brought coffee and

doughnuts to the line in support.

Guild members are still voting on the pact as we go to press and the tally won't be final until June 9.

"Because of the way our members work we have a fairly complicated ratification process," Herbert said. "We mail ballots and it takes time to get them back because they go to sea for two or three weeks at a time."

The battle is just beginning for Local 400. Its contract with the Council of Marine Carriers, the employers' group, expired last October. The local expects to begin hard bargaining after its caucus May 10.

"We have always done 'me too' agreements in this industry, and this time the Guild set the pattern," Local 400 President Terry Engler said. According to Herbert, the guild got 2.5 percent for the first nine months, three percent for the next three months and three percent for each of the last two years. They also won increases in their benefits. Canadian workers have a national healthcare plan, so most U.S.-type healthcare issues never reach the bargaining table. The contract's package fills in benefits not covered by the national plan, including eye and dental care, drug payments and long-term disability.

Local 400's main problem is with the tug company Seaspan International Ltd., its largest employer and Canada's largest tug company. The union filed for a common-employer status hearing Nov. 16, 2001 with the Canadian Industrial Relations Board to maintain jurisdiction over the work the company gave to the Seafarers International Union after its 1999 buyout of a number of small tug fleets. Many of those boats had SIU crews, but since they were now doing Local 400 work they should belong to Local 400, Engler said. The company, however, sent more work to the SIU-crewed boats and left Local 400 workers on the beach. The board took the employer's side and ruled March 19 for keeping both unions. Now the unions will have to work it out with the employer and each other.

"Traditional jurisprudence in Canada is that employers want one union representing workers and they almost always get it," Engler said. "This time they wanted two and they got it. The board can order a representation election or it can choose which union will remain. With Seaspan they didn't even give us a vote."

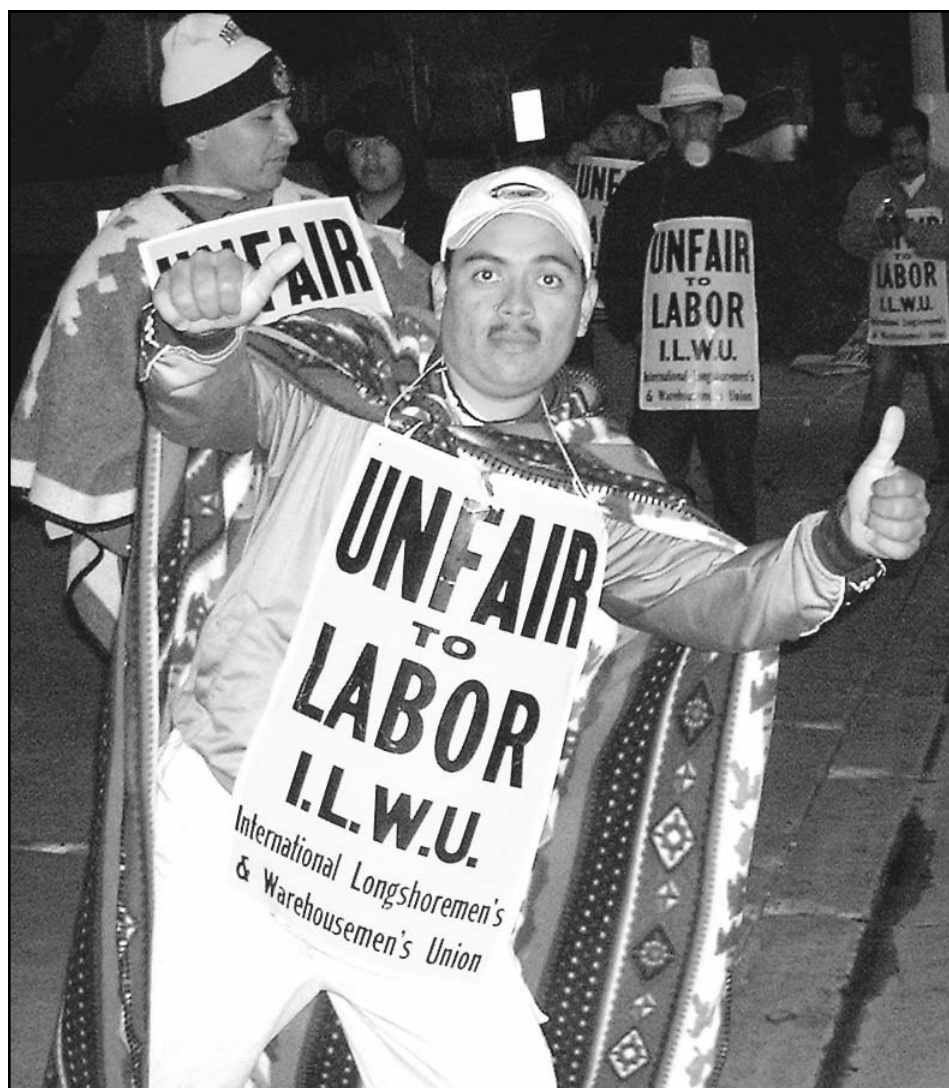
The board was persuaded by the arguments of the employer's counsel to keep both unions, Engler said.

Prior to the merger Local 400 had four or five boats working continuously in the harbor and two ship docking vessels. Now there's only one docking vessel.

If the Guild strike is any example, the employers don't want another job action. A coalition of B.C. business leaders claimed the Guild strike cost the provincial economy \$62 million a day, according to the *Journal of Commerce*. P&O Ports recently announced plans to double container capacity over the next year and they will need good labor relations.

"We're going to the company and giving them a proposal that they should give us our work back," Engler said. "If they give us our work back, they won't have a dispute. If they don't, we will need to push the company. They've given away our work and they are expanding that. If we don't do anything about it, we could lose the work we have."

—Tom Price



Local 26 members walked the line 24/7 for two weeks and beat back AEP's demands for take-backs.



# ILWU Canada convention stresses political action and solidarity

by Tom Price

ILWU Canada packed four days of union democracy into its 2004 Convention beginning March 30, and the union came away with new commitments to political action, solidarity and internationalism. The 28th Convention/ 18th Biennial in Surrey, B.C. provided a working session for setting policies and goals and a forum for decision-making by member-elected delegates. Officers and members reported on their plans and activities, while guest speakers dropped by to discuss issues of the day, each with a recurring theme on the need for political action. Toward the end, members announced their candidacy for office in elections to be held in late April.

## OFFICER REPORTS

ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne warned about the growing threat to civil liberties and workers' rights promoted under the guise of national security. Bill C-55, the antiterrorism legislation that along with C-36 makes up Canada's Patriot Act, puts unions at risk of being designated as terrorist organizations because of their advocacy for workers and the poor, he said.

"Bill C-36 was used to override the Charter of Rights [Canada's Bill of Rights] in order to allow the RCMP [the federal police] to raid the home and office of an *Ottawa Citizen* reporter," Dufresne said. "It could be used to raid any of our homes, without accountability."

The convention later resolved to continue the fight for labor and civil rights. In his political report Dufresne outlined a policy for the future.

"Political action will have to become a bigger part not only of ILWU Canada, but a bigger part of the locals' and of the members' lives," he said. "The B.C. Federation of Labour's political action plan starts this month. We will contribute to a \$1.5 million fund the B.C. Fed. is putting into political action. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will also put up \$1.5 million." The convention voted to raise the annual political assessment by one dollar, to \$4.

Dufresne reported on mutual support with affiliated unions. The Grain Services Union and the Retail Wholesale Department Store Union of Saskatchewan were instrumental in establishing the Labour Issues Campaign that helped save that province's left-leaning government, he said. ILWU Canada helped B.C.'s Retail Wholesale Union fend off a raid by other unions. The RWU in turn aided the ILWU in organizing and education with people on the ground and cost sharing. The ILWU now has a seat on the CLC's Executive Council and Dufresne sits on the CLC's Political Action Committee, giving the ILWU added clout in the fight against anti-labor politicians.

First Vice President Chad O'Neill reported on organizing setbacks and welcomed several newly organized units to the union. As many as 11 organizing targets are still in the union's sights, and the convention later voted to maintain the \$4 per member per month organizing assessment for those making more than \$25 an hour and \$1.50 for those making less.

Second Vice President Al Le Monnier reported on the battles fought by the ILWU and the B.C. Fed. against the right-wing provincial government's efforts to lower toxic exposure limits. The province would like to move to more corporate "self-regulation," but labor will fight to maintain standards. Le Monnier reported on the health and safety conference of the International Labor Organization he attended last December. The ILWU also worked with the Canadian Maritime Advisory Council to maintain maritime labor, safety and regula-

tory standards. Le Monnier pointed out that the federal government "has the same agenda as the [B.C. Premier Gordon] Campbell government" when it comes to "voluntary" corporate regulation. Labor will fight hard against that, he said.

Third Vice President Sabi Veriah shared Le Monnier's duties on safety issues and reported on member education. A number of courses are offered, including classes on arbitrations and safety. Veriah also helped educate employers and union representatives on their responsibilities for safety.

Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gordienko spoke on the union's financial health and explained spending on member education, scholarships, organizing, the women's committee and political action. Delegates debated and approved assessments for them and increased funding for political action, the scholarship fund and for ILWU Canada's operations.

## RESOLUTIONS AND POLICIES

Delegates debated and approved a resolution giving the Women's Committee voice but no vote on all motions before the convention. Each local may send a delegate to the Women's Committee and that committee can send one delegate to the convention. Pensioners' clubs will now have two voice-but-no-vote convention delegates per club, where previously they had only two such delegates representing all clubs. There are now three clubs, one for Vancouver Island, one mainland, and one for Prince Rupert. The convention also voted a one-time \$5 per member assessment to host the coastwise Pacific Coast Pensioners Assn. convention this year. Other pensioner resolutions called on the union to support retiree benefits in negotiations.

The convention voted to oppose Canada's participation in the U.S. "Star Wars" anti-missile program and, as the resolution put it, to oppose Prime Minister Paul Martin's "corporate opportunism and disingenuous approach to rebuilding Iraq" through privatization while he ignores Canada's needs. ILWU Canada also resolved to support worker and human rights in Colombia.

The convention resolved to support efforts to keep the work of loading and processing logs in Canada. Currently the industry imports workers to load the logs, and exports them before processing them into lumber, costing many Canadian jobs.

Local 400, ILWU Canada's marine division, noting that Canadian steamship companies will be expanding their fleets, proposed a campaign to get Canadian ships registered and flagged in Canada and to allow seafarers to choose representation by Canadian maritime unions or the International Transport Workers' Federation. It passed unanimously.

## GUEST SPEAKERS

Angela Schira, Secretary-Treasurer of the B.C. Federation of Labour, led off the guest speeches. A true coal miner's daughter, she is the first woman in that position and in many others in the Canadian labor movement. With the neo-conservatives in office, she said, there has never been a stronger connection between the ballot box and the paycheck. Her criticisms of Prime Minister Martin, who sold his ownership in Canada Steamship Lines to his sons last year,



Left to right: Third Vice President Sabi Veriah, First Vice President Chad O'Neill, Second Vice President Al Le Monnier, Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gordienko, and International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams.

brought the delegates to their feet.

"His steamship company uses flags of convenience to help him avoid the same taxes he collects from you and your members," she said.

Martin is putting profits first by contracting-out healthcare while his party in provinces like B.C. tries to sell off public water, hydroelectric plants and B.C. Railways. New labor laws Martin and his party are proposing could allow employment for children as young as 12 in what she called "a perverse form of class-size reduction in schools."

International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams and Coast Committeeman Joe Wenzl received warm welcomes as they stressed coastwise unity and the urgent need for political action on both sides of the border.

"I talked to a key Democratic Senator and he made it clear," Adams said. "He said 'If Bush gets another term, you guys are done.'"

That drew boisterous applause from the Canadian members. Their own government under the Liberal Party wants to weaken labor laws and make it harder to organize.

"At the end of April we're taking 50 of our members and our officers and we're going to Washington, D.C.," Adams said. "We're going to hit the Hill and lobby hard."

Adams and Wenzl spent many hours with the Canadian sisters and brothers, sharing stories, problems and solutions.

"I talked to the younger people at [longshore] Local 502," Adams said. "They're on fire over there. They're organizing. They are doing things we at the International are going to work harder on."

Wenzl received a standing ovation when he spoke of ILWU cross-border solidarity.

"I want to publicly acknowledge the vital role ILWU Canada played in our historic 2002 contract negotiations," Wenzl said. "Your solidarity was crucial to our success. You were there for us, and we will be there for you."

"We were with a group of ship-pers and they were talking about how they would get around the troubles during the 2002 negotiations," Wenzl said. "And they said, 'Yeah, we could go through the Panama Canal and British Columbia.' We didn't say anything, but just smiled among ourselves because we knew the solidarity of our sisters and brothers. They weren't going to get any cargo through British Columbia."

Wenzl pointed to a common struggle in this year's elections in English-speaking, Pacific countries:

"Workers in the U.S. and Canada have to take our governments back,"

he said, "because the rich people have it and they're taking tax cuts for themselves. It's time to give it back to the workers who built the U.S. and Canada, and to remind them that we did that. You have Mr. Martin, Australia has Mr. Howard, and we have a son of a Bush. They will all be defeated this year when labor rises up and takes back our countries."

CLC President Ken Georgetti, leader of the 2.5-million-member federation, blasted Martin's federal budget as having "more good news for cows than workers."

"It's true," Georgetti said. "One billion dollars in aid for the cattle industry, and almost nothing for working people."

He complimented Dufresne's nine-month stint on the Marine Security Labour Caucus and criticized the government's proposed background checks on workers.

"As you know, the draft regulation was so invasive into personal privacy that it could check your bank accounts and possibly subject your family to interviews by the RCMP," he said. Georgetti went on to ask all workers to support the New Democratic Party, whose candidate for Prime Minister, Jack Layton, spoke later.

"When it comes to senior issues, why are we not protecting workers' pensions?" Layton said. "Why do we allow banks to line up [for payment] ahead of pensioners when a company goes bankrupt? They're stealing workers' money. Unions bargained for this money and put it into a fund for retirees. We [the NDP] put a bill before the House of Commons to put pensions in first place for payment."

Layton attacked free-trade agreements that would prevent Canada passing legislation to keep log processing in Canada.

"We have proposed a moratorium on raw log exports so we can develop a processing industry here and keep these jobs in Canada," he said.

Layton also criticized Prime Minister Martin's plan to publicly fund a privatized health care system and blasted the pharmaceutical companies that make huge profits and spend more on advertising than research.

Towards the end of the convention nominations for national offices were held. Longshore Local 500's Dave Pritchett challenged Tom Dufresne for President; Local 500's Glenn Bolkow challenged Local 502's Chad O'Neill for the First Vice Presidency; Local 500's Tim Footman and Barry Washburn will run for the open Second Vice Presidency position; and Local 500's Ken Bauder will challenge Local 500's Mark Gordienko for the Secretary-Treasurer's post.

# IEB endorses Kerry

By Steve Stallone

The ILWU International Executive Board, meeting in its regular session April 15 and 16 in San Francisco, voted unanimously to join the rest of the American labor movement in endorsing Massachusetts Democratic Senator John Kerry for president.

While the board debated endorsing various Democratic candidates at its special session Jan. 7, it could not come to a consensus. Three months later, Kerry had all but wrapped up the Democratic nomination, so the board decided he was the candidate most likely to accomplish the union's primary political goal: the defeat of George Bush.

In other actions, two new board members were sworn in. Longshore Local 10's Lawrence Thibeaux was chosen by the Northern California locals to replace Kevin Gibbons, who transferred to clerks' Local 34. Richard Cavalli, the president of Local 34, already sits on the board and no local can have more than one representative. Jerry Lagazo of Hawaii Local 142 finally got to take his elected position on the board as the Islands' representative from the sugar industry after being out with a personal injury.

The board also set the date for the next International Convention. It will be held May 15-19, 2006 in

Vancouver, British Columbia and the Longshore Caucus will be held there the following week, May 22-27.

In the Vice Presidents' reports, Vice President, Mainland Bob McEllrath and Vice President, Hawaii Wesley Furtado, who are in charge of the union's organizing program, announced the Organizing Dept. will hold a three-day training session in Honolulu June 3, 4, and 5 with the AFL-CIO's organizing chief Stuart Acuff. Ten rank-and-file organizers from each of Local 142's divisions and the International organizing staff will attend the training.

Pursuant to previous board action the two conference rooms in the International headquarters were dedicated and named for two of the union's most important leaders, former International Secretary-Treasurer Lou Goldblatt, who served in that position from 1943 to 1977 and former International President Jimmy Herman, who served from 1977 to 1991.

Goldblatt's three daughters, Ann King Smith, Lee Nixon and Liza Goldblatt, attended the dedication ceremony, emceed by current International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. Former International Secretary-Treasurer Joe Ibarra made the dedication of the Lou Goldblatt room, reminiscing about the ways Goldblatt had made a difference in the lives and



Tom Price

Louis Goldblatt's daughter Lee Nixon (right) speaks at the ceremony dedicating one of the conference rooms at the ILWU International Headquarters to her father. Listening intently are (left to right) her sisters, Ann King Smith and Liza Goldblatt, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer William Adams and Doug Smith, Ann's husband.

careers of upcoming ILWU leaders like himself, Curtis McClain, LeRoy King and Keith Eickman.

"One of the things that struck me is that when I first started, when I became active [in the ILWU], there was a guy like Louie Goldblatt who took me under his wings and introduced me to some of the weirdest, strangest, most wonderful people that make up this wonderful ILWU," Ibarra said.

He went on to tell anecdotes about how Goldblatt would come up with strategies to move even the most obstinate employers into negotiating good contracts.

"Every time we got Louie involved in bargaining, the agreement resulted in at least a nickel or dime more, in some cases even more," Ibarra said. "It was a lot of money in those times. The [employers'] attorneys always understood that every time we got Louie involved, it was going to cost them more money."

Clerks Local 34 President Richard Cavalli made the dedication of the large conference room for Herman.

"This room is probably the most appropriate room to dedicate to Jimmy Herman," Cavalli said. "This is where he did his work. If memory

serves me correctly, that's where he sat, over there where Max is sitting. The employers sat on the other side of the table. Jimmy did so much excellent work right here on the contracts that he negotiated."

Cavalli went on to joke about Herman's poor eyesight and the problems it caused in his driving and parking.

"Jimmy might not have been able to see very well through a windshield, but he had a clarity of vision about what this society was supposed to be that was as right as he could possibly be," Cavalli continued. "He knew instinctively that there were things in this society that were not provided for workers that should be provided for workers. Jimmy's whole life was dedicated to straightening that out and helping working people."

"The last thing I want to say about Jimmy Herman is that it has always appeared to me that the task that he took on here was a daunting one," Cavalli concluded. "He followed Harry Bridges. I can't imagine a worse position to be in than to try to follow a legend. Jimmy did that, and he did that very well. He did it with grace and with understanding and with dedication."

## DONATO ELECTED NEW HBI PRESIDENT



Steve Stallone

Harry Bridges Institute President Dave Arian (right) handed over his position to HBI Executive Director Shannon Donato (left) at the HBI Board of Directors meeting in San Francisco April 16. The board members voted for Donato to take over and then launched a new initiative to educate the current generation of union members on the importance of building on their rich heritage of fighting for workers rights.

"My first challenge is to help Institute members in other West Coast port cities to build the strong community links we have forged in the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles," said Donato. "I am going to have to hit the road and help other communities embrace the legacy of Harry Bridges and the importance of building power for working families."

The board of the HBI selected Donato to replace founding president Arian who stepped down after 11 years at the helm of the organization. Recently elected as president of longshore Local 13, Arian's new duties will keep him focused on his local, but he will continue to serve the Institute as a board member.

"I have enjoyed my time with the Harry Bridges Institute, but because Shannon Donato is such a capable leader it made it much easier for me to step down as the president of the board," Arian said. "I have worked day-to-day with her and I know she will continue to expand the programs and resources of the Institute in new and exciting ways."

Donato came to the HBI in 2001 as the event coordinator for the hugely successful 100th anniversary of the birth of Harry Bridges. Shortly after that event she was named as executive director of the institute and has been responsible for running the day-to-day programs of the Institute as well as spearheading such critical community projects as the Adopt-a-Family Program that supported striking and locked-out members of the UFCW last fall and winter.

The HBI was launched in 1993 as a non-profit education institute to carry forward its namesake's legacy of innovation and his commitment to bettering the lives of working families.

In addition to educating working families about Harry Bridges through productions such as "From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks" by Ian Ruskin, the Institute works to maintain his commitment to civil rights for all workers by sponsoring special Juneteenth celebrations honoring Black workers and an annual Cesar Chavez tribute honoring the founder of the United Farm Workers, as well as events honoring working-class women and celebrating the life-long commitment of union members in the community.

## MAY IS MEDICAL, DENTAL CHOICE MONTH

Active and retired longshore families in the ports where members have a choice can change medical plans during the open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 2004. The change will be effective July 1, 2004. San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Portland/Vancouver active and retired longshore workers may change dental plans in the month of May for coverage effective July 1, 2004. In addition to the May open enrollment period, members may change their health coverage once at any time during the Plan Year (July 1-June 30).

The July 1, 2002 Memorandum of Understanding between the ILWU and PMA provides that new registrants in the ports where members have a choice of medical plans shall be assigned Kaiser HMO Plan or Group Health Cooperative HMO Plan for the first 18 months of registration. After 18 months, those registrants who have qualified for continued eligibility under Mid-Year/Annual Review hours requirement will have a choice of medical plans. New registrants in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland/Vancouver and Washington will have a choice of dental plans on the first of the month following registration, and may change dental plans during the Open Enrollment period and one additional time during the Plan Year.

**MEDICAL CHOICE:** The medical plan choice is between Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and the ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan for Southern California Locals 13, 26, 29, 63 and 94; Northern California Locals 10, 18, 34 (San Francisco), 34 (Stockton), 54, 75 and 91; and Oregon-Columbia River Locals 4, 8, 40, and 92. In the Washington State area, the choices for Locals 19, 23, 32, 47, 52 and 98 are Group Health Cooperative and the ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan.

**DENTAL PLANS:** For Los Angeles Locals, dental choice is between Delta Dental Plan and the Sakai, Simms, Simon and Sugiyama group plan. For San Francisco Locals, dental choice is between Delta Dental Plan, City Center Dental and Naismith group plan. For Portland/Vancouver Locals dental choice is between Blue Cross of Oregon Dentacare, Oregon Kaiser Dental Plan and Oregon/Washington Dental Service. For Washington Locals dental choice is between Washington Dental Service and Dental Health Services.

Information on the dental plans, and Kaiser and Group Health Cooperative medical plans, and forms to change plans can be obtained at the Locals and the ILWU-PMA Benefit Plans office. The ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan description booklet is under preparation and will be furnished as soon as it is available.

**All enrollment cards must be completed and submitted to the Benefit Plans office by May 31 for the change to be effective July 1.**



# Chittagong dockers gather global backing

By Alan Benjamin

Foes of privatization in Bangladesh drew global support for their seven-year fight against Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) at the “National Convention to Save Chittagong, Save the Country,” held March 18. The event brought more than 1,000 Bangladeshi unionists and activists to Chittagong, along with invited guests from Pakistan, India, France and the U.S.

Shariat Ullah, general secretary of the Chittagong Port Workers Union, opened the convention with a detailed account of the protracted struggle by the dockworkers to save their port and their jobs from SSA’s privatization scheme. SSA is the same company that led the employer offensive against the ILWU during the 2002 longshore contract struggle and got a \$4.8 million contract from the Bush administration to operate the port of Umm Qasr in Iraq.

SSA is trying to build a half-billion-dollar mega-terminal on the Karnafuli River just downstream from the public Port of Chittagong, where 50,000 union dockworkers make a living. Its location would block much of the public port’s traffic and its huge capacity would siphon most of the public port’s work. The notoriously anti-union SSA would not likely abide by the wage and working standards of the unionized Chittagong dockers, effectively destroying the jobs and livelihoods of all those who depend on the economic activity of Bangladesh’s only real port.

Sk Shahidullah, convener of the Save Oil, Gas, Port, and Power [from privatization] National Committee, also addressed the gathering and placed the struggle of the portworkers in the context of the nationwide fight to defend and preserve all public services and enterprises placed on the chopping block by the government at the behest of the IMF and World Bank.

Chittagong Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury highlighted the open-

ing session with his review and denunciation of SSA, its many maneuvers to try to take over the port of Chittagong, and the system it represents.

“I salute the presence at our National Convention of Brother Clarence Thomas from the ILWU in the United States,” Chowdhury said. “I want to thank him for everything he is doing for our city. I salute him as a representative of the American people, which I do not confuse with the American administration and system. I condemn that system. The United States today wishes to control the port of Chittagong so that they can control our entire sub-continent. They have taken over Afghanistan and Iraq. And they want more. They conquer countries in order to destroy them.”

Thomas, who represented ILWU longshore Local 10 at the convention, recounted the bitter struggles waged by the longshore workers in the U.S. against SSA. He told the Bangladeshi workers, “Your struggle is our struggle, just like our struggle is your struggle.”

Thomas noted that SSA is seeking to do the same thing to portworkers in Chittagong that it has attempted to do to longshore workers in the U.S. He went on to talk about the March 20th antiwar demonstrations around the world and the fight of the Oakland 25, who were facing charges after police attacked their peaceful picket of SSA in an antiwar protest on the Oakland docks April 7, 2003. Convention delegates gave Thomas a standing ovation.

At the close of the convention, the delegates unanimously approved the Final Declaration prepared by the convention conveners and presented to the gathering by Taffazul Hussain, president of the Bangladesh National Workers Federation.

The statement detailed the convention’s opposition to privatization of the port and other national resources, especially when that gives control of public resources to foreign

multinational corporations.

“The port of Chittagong is the lifeline of the country. This is the only active seaport,” the Declaration read in part. “If the port is taken over by the foreign ownership, the whole country as its hinterland will go under the foreign rule. Chittagong is the center of all economic activities of the country; if it goes at the foreign hand, the whole country will be subjugated.

“As such to save our port, oil, gas and railway from privatization means saving the very existence of Bangladesh,” the Declaration continued. “We must save Bangladesh and for that we issue this clarion call to support our cause to all the organization, trade unions and individuals—to all those who are committed to uphold democracy, human and workers’ rights. In spite of our political dif-

ferences and diversified views, we are sure to build a joint resistance against the aggressor to save every inch of our motherland.”

The people of Chittagong are still battling SSA and its U.S. government sponsors to save their port and their city. In the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Mayor Chowdhury is particularly concerned that an SSA terminal alongside the port of Chittagong could be used as a military facility by the U.S. to control the entire region.

*[This article is based on reports from Clarence Thomas, Tafazzul Hussain and François Forgeue, who was the representative of the Paris-based International Liaison Committee at the Convention.]*



## Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Bloody Thursday on the opening night of LaborFest 2004

with the world premiere screening of the rough-cut of the film version of “From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks” the acclaimed one-man play by Ian Ruskin

**JULY 5, 2004 AT 7:30 P.M.**

Victoria Theater, 2961 16th St., San Francisco (one block off Mission Street)

*Q&A following the screening with Ruskin and Director Haskell Wexler, two-time Academy Award winner. Additional surprise live performances. Tickets \$10-\$20 (proceeds will be split between LaborFest and the Harry Bridges Project)*

**For ticket information please go to [www.laborfest.net](http://www.laborfest.net) or call 415-642-8066**



**July 5 - July 31, 2004**

Many events including plays, films, labor maritime history boat tour, history bus tour, poetry reading & other events. Please check the schedule at: [www.laborfest.net](http://www.laborfest.net), or contact (415) 642-8066, LaborFest, P.O. Box 40983, San Francisco, CA 94140

## A CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY & TRADITIONS OF THE LONGSHORE DIVISION

**September 26-30, 2004  
Palm Springs, California**

Sponsored by the Longshore Division Coast Committee

**Planned by:** Coast Education Committee  
(Local 54 President Dennis Brueckner, chair)

**Coordinated by:** Gene Vrana, ILWU Director of Educational Services.

*Sessions at the conference will include speakers, panel discussions, and multi-media presentations on:*

Harry Bridges, Working Conditions, & Maritime Labor in the early years 1900-1932 • Labor Unity 1934-2004—ILWU, CIO, AFL-CIO • Rank & File Democracy—Traditions & Trends • Social Justice Unionism—How and why the ILWU has been so politically progressive • How the Longshore Division Works: From a Caucus to a Division • The Longshore experience in Hawaii, Alaska, Canada • Fighting for Jurisdiction I: The March Inland—How the origins, objectives, and strategies of the original March Inland compare to the current needs of the Division to grow, organize, and support non-longshore organizing drives • Fighting for Jurisdiction II: The New March Inland—Pacific Coast Trends in Marine Cargo Handling • Contract Crossroads—The changes, gains, and challenges in pivotal contract years 1934-2004 • Political Action—ILWU traditions of electoral and legislative action on the national, regional, state and local level • International trends in ports, longshore employment and unionization • International Solidarity 1934-2004

Additional information and applications will be mailed to all longshore, clerks’, and walking bosses’ locals in June, and will also be posted on the ILWU website ([www.ilwu.org](http://www.ilwu.org)). Priority consideration will be given to members who have already demonstrated their commitment to action through their participation in the Longshore Division’s Area Contract Workshops and political action conferences in 2003 and 2004.

# Children of NAFTA

**BOOK REVIEW:** “*Children of NAFTA: Labor Wars on the U.S. Mexico Border*” by David Bacon. University of California Press, 2004, 348 pages.

Reviewed by Fred Glass

It has been ten years since NAFTA codified a new set of rules for trade among the United States and its immediate neighbors to the north and south. Hailed by post-Keynesian economists as the road to a prosperous future for all three nations, NAFTA was pushed hard by the Clinton administration over fierce opposition by organized labor and its allies in Congress. In “Children of NAFTA,” Berkeley-based photojournalist David Bacon examines the balance sheet for working people in two of the three countries a decade after the treaty’s signing. He finds that while corporations have exploited the loosened border for the benefit of their shareholders, the human beings that do the work for them haven’t fared nearly so well.

Take, for instance, Honorina Lopez, who works in the onion fields of the Mexicali Valley with other members of her family. Bacon describes her activities: “Her hands are very quick. She lines up eight or nine onions, straightening out their roots and tails. Then she knocks the dirt off, puts a rubber band around them, and adds the bunch to those already in the box beside her. She’s too shy to say more than her name, but she’s obviously proud to be able to perform a task at which her brother Rigoberto, at thirteen, working near her, already excels.” Honorina is six. The company she works for, Muranaka Farms, shut down operations near Oxnard and Coachella in southern California and moved to Mexico after NAFTA passed, setting up one of many “*maquilas* in the fields.”

Child labor is as illegal in Mexico as it is in the United States. That doesn’t prevent 3,000 kids under the age of 14 from working in the Mexicali Valley’s green onion harvest. The Mexican government estimates that between 800,000 and 2.5 million children work instead of attending school throughout Mexico.

Not all of these truancies can be laid at the doorstep of NAFTA. But the treaty has, according to Bacon, exacerbated the need for families to bring children to work as their traditional economies have been overcome by global capital regimes. Recent academic surveys and studies of communities on the Mexican side of the border determine that a family of four requires a weekly income of 1,500 pesos to survive. The average *maquila-dora* worker makes but 350

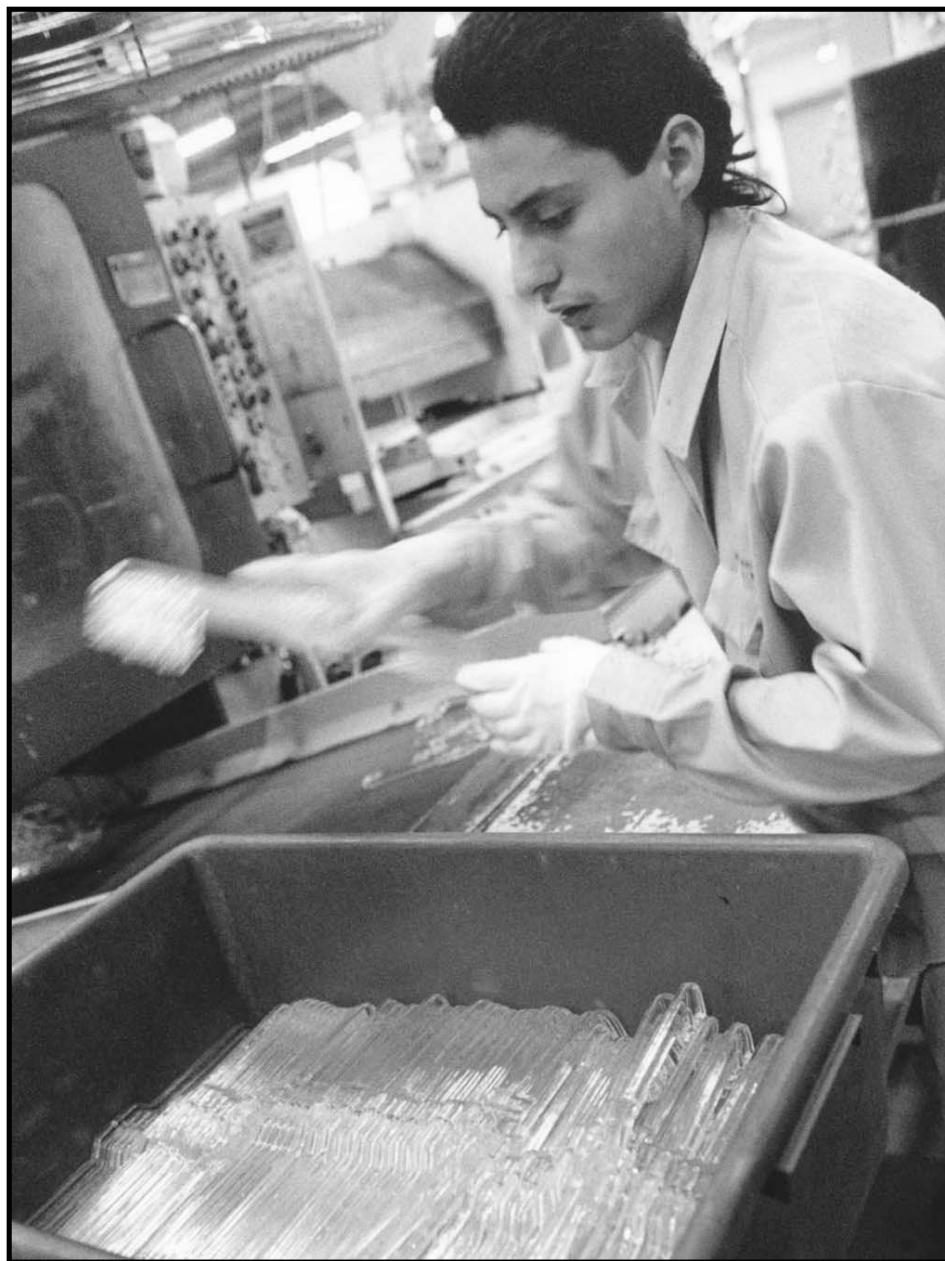
pesos, requiring as many family members as possible to work, and two and three families to share accommodations.

Bacon isn’t an academic, and he isn’t just a reporter with a camera. Engaged with the struggles of the people he’s documenting, his work stands in a tradition of photojournalistic advocacy that, regrettably, has all but disappeared from mainstream reporting. At the turn of the last century muckraking writer/photographers like Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine combined careful reportage, documentary photography and a talent for publicity to help mobilize public opinion in battles to change the living and working conditions at the bottom of society. Today’s journalism environment is defined by an ever-shrinking number of giant media conglomerates disinclined to pursue hard news, let alone social justice reportage.

This makes Bacon’s achievement in “Children of NAFTA” all the more remarkable. His book originated in articles he wrote for mainstream publications as well as union newsletters about the people working in the new economy. (Full disclosure: some of his articles were written for union publications I edit.) In his travels Bacon found that as globalization transformed production and distribution of goods and services, workers in each country have been discovering they have more in common than they used to. “Children of NAFTA” reveals what’s happening below the media radar screen, where workers have begun to act on the basis of their new-found shared interests.

You can see this not only in what Bacon reports but also in the images recorded by his camera. Adhering to a classical black and white social documentary approach, Bacon’s rigorous, uncropped wide-angle photographs make no bones about his pro-worker biases. A single glance tells us that whether he has snapped an injured worker, the patterns of ruts in the rain-wrecked streets of a *colonia*, or a demonstration of flag-waving trade unionists, this is photography as a weapon in the class struggle.

His orientation is appropriate to its subject matter. More than a million workers produce everything from microelectronic components to medical supplies to car parts in the *maquiladora* factories along the southern rim of the border. While many are covered by union contracts, most of these are worthless “protection contracts,” signed behind the backs of the workers by the companies and round-heeled unions affiliated



Photos by David Bacon

Tijuana

A young worker pulls plastic parts from a plastic molding machine which will be assembled into coathangers for the garment industry, in the Tijuana *maquiladora* of Plásticos Bajacal. Workers tried unsuccessfully to organize an independent, democratic union there in 1993.

with Mexico’s corrupt official labor federations. These conditions make the *maquilas* an inviting locale for transnational corporations seeking cheap labor and uninterrupted production.

Bacon details many thwarted efforts by *maquila* workers to organize independent unions. Fearful of losing international investment—especially when their economy is struggling—Mexican authorities collude with the local managers of foreign companies and the official union confederations to keep their enterprises closed to independent unions and fair union elections. Such practices come with the cost of serious health and safety violations inside workplaces, and often tragically dangerous environmental damage to the surrounding *colonias* and the people attempting to live in them. Bacon documents the spectacular failure of appeals by Mexican and American unions alike through NAFTA’s administrative machinery, even in the most egregious instances.

“Children of NAFTA” isn’t all about Mexico. Soon after workers at the Friction auto parts plant in Irvine, California, protested the treatment of the company’s workers in Mexico, their union local was notified that Friction was shutting its doors for the last time. Supervisors told them, “This is what you get for what you’ve done.” The company officially denied any retaliatory motive. Bacon also takes us through a number of other case studies north of the border, including more cheerful episodes like the Nebraska meatpacking plant successfully organized by its mostly Mexican immigrant workforce with the support of local churches and community groups.

An optimist, Bacon finds NAFTA’s silver lining in heightened cross-border solidarity efforts. In one of these,

cooperation with U.S. activists helped *maquila* workers to form an independent union. At Kuk Dong, a modern Korean-owned garment factory in Atlixco, abusive supervisors yelled at and hit the workers, many of whom were as young as fourteen. Workers couldn’t eat the cafeteria food, which ranged from merely bad to putrid, with worms in the meat (shades of Sergei Eisenstein’s “Battleship Potemkin”). Protests and retaliations escalated until the young workers occupied the factory on January 9, 2001. It took days before strikers were removed by club-wielding police.

Even then the workers didn’t admit defeat. Regrouping, they contacted worker support groups and student anti-sweatshop organizations in the U.S. The latter pressured Nike, one of Kuk Dong’s largest customers, to honor the company’s own code of conduct. When the Kuk Dong workers formally established their own independent union, the company agreed to recognize it, eventually signing a union contract.

“Children of NAFTA” is a real contribution to our understanding of the changing human face of the economy. Bacon’s perspective and on-the-ground research lead to the conclusion that efforts by workers themselves to find solutions to their problems—by reaching out to their counterparts on either side of the increasingly porous border—offer more hope than does NAFTA’s toothless enforcement machinery for resisting predatory neo-liberal economic policies. Capital ignores borders. “Children of NAFTA” shows that, in defense of their own interests, workers need to erase the dotted lines as well. Indeed, they are already beginning to do so.

Fred Glass serves as Communications Director for the California Federation of Teachers and teaches Labor Studies at City College of San Francisco.



Mexicali

Honorina Ruiz, 6 years old, ties bunches of green onions together in a field farmed by Muranaka Farms, a U.S. grower. Her mother Esperanza and brother Rigoberto (at right) work with her.





# PEOPLE

## New faces at the ILWU recovery programs

by Tom Price

The ILWU in the U.S. and Canada, together with the employers, provide a drug and alcohol recovery program to help workers in trouble rebuild their lives and return to work. The benefit may also cover spouses and dependent children.

Recently George Cobbs, the Coast Director, and Daniel Borsheim, the Washington State representative, retired from their posts at the U.S. longshore Alcohol and Drug Recovery Program, and others have stepped up to fill their places. In Canada, Ted Grewcutt replaced Bill Bloor and Cathy Stewart to become Director of the Employee Assistance Program.

Cobbs stepped down Jan. 6 after 24 years of ADRP service and 38 years in longshore Local 10. ADRP directors chose Jackie Cummings, who has been the ADRP representative in Southern California since 1987, to take his post. Donnie Schwendeman will take over for Borsheim in Seattle and Norm McLeod will take on Cobbs' duties as Northern California representative.

Grewcutt joined longshore Local 500 in 1967 and had been in the industry since 1961. He spent the last 10 years as a linesman, and provided holiday relief for his predecessor for several years.

Jim Copp remains as the Columbia River, Oregon Coast ADRP rep and Gary Atkinson continues as Northern California rep for warehouse Locals 6 and 17.

As Coast Director, Cummings approves expenses, treatment programs, extensions and continuations of treatment, and supports the other reps. Previously she directed Turning Point, a recovery program in Santa Rosa that treated many longshore workers. Her predecessor at ADRP, Ed Torres, recommended her for his position when he stepped down.

"Now we have two new reps, and that involves training," she said. "That's a fun part, dealing with people who are new and enthusiastic about their positions."

"But the best thing about the program is that it saves lives. In the employer's eyes the best thing about the program is that we give them back good employees. They go from problem employees to exemplary employees."

Cummings will stay in Southern California and Norm McLeod will work out of the same San Francisco office Cobbs used at the Local 10 hall.

"I've been working for a long time with George Cobbs, and he's given me the opportunity to wear my own shoes rather than standing in his," McLeod said.

When longshore members see McLeod, it's not like seeing the dentist or some guy in a white coat. He's been a Local 10 member since 1969.

"Many of the people in Local 10 already know me because I trained them when I was a tractor and fork-lift instructor," he said. "I was an Employee Assistance Program coordinator in Local 10, and we took training up and down the Coast for that position. We were George Cobbs' eyes and ears."

EAP reps are like union stewards, except they don't represent the worker to the employer, they represent the worker to him or herself. The reps pass out literature on recovery and provide education on substance abuse problems. When a person is ready, they recommend treatment options. When the program is successful, it reconciles the worker with his or her job and family.

For Schwendeman, ADRP is an ideal job.

"The dream combines two passions I have, one being the ILWU and its members, and the other, the field of substance abuse and the recovery



Richard J. Merrick

Jackie Cummings, new Coast Director for the ADRP.

from it," Schwendeman said. "That's what my education is in, and I will continue."

Schwendeman will graduate in June from Highline Community College and give a keynote address. The 11-year member of longshore Local 19 made the first team on the All-USA Academic Team this year. He looks forward to putting his studies in human services, co-dependency, social work and psychology to good use in his new duties.

"A lot of members aren't aware of the ADRP benefit, how it functions separately from the regular health benefits and how it is administered," Schwendeman said. "My first challenge is to get out there and educate the membership as to what they're entitled to and how easy it is to have it initiated."

Some members fear the employers might retaliate if they enter the program, but the PMA supports it, Cummings said.

"People have never been penal-

ized by PMA for seeking help," she said. "I'd say that 80 percent of the time PMA doesn't know that our members are getting help, because they haven't involved the employer by getting in trouble at work."

Cummings knows the tasks ahead of her.

"My job is to ensure the program remains the highly respected workplace model it is in the industry, and that we can negotiate high-quality treatment for our members," she said. "We also have to make the membership aware of their benefits, including coverage for adolescents."

The 24-year-old ADRP provides literature at longshore halls and its representatives actively seek out people who want help. *The Dispatcher* prints recovery program addresses and phone numbers on its back page in every edition. But it takes an individual's commitment to recovery for it to work.

"The door only opens when you're ready to open it," McLeod said.

## Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

### RECENT RETIREES:

**Local 4**—Ronald Mullane, Lorren Bray, Fred Kerr, Donald Lail; **Local 7**—Marlin Stamnes; **Local 8**—Gerald E. Brown, Norm Parks, Samuel Lawyer, Frank Kirk Jr., Charles Perry, Earl West; **Local 10**—Robert Ford, Aldrich Davis, George Cobbs Jr., Charles Burgin, Albert Luia, Ernesto Menendez, John E. Williams, Barry Krohn, James A. Taylor, Archie Ward, Frank T. Mirabella, Roger Lilles, Rogers Wright, Joseph Cresci; **Local 12**—Stephen Erickson, Phillip K. Armstrong, Richard Purcell; **Local 13**—Alfred Blevins Jr., Atilio Gomez, Ronaldo Arriaga Jr., Terrence Mc Lellan, Richard Lane, Robert J. Silvas, Frank A. Lauro, Harold A. Raphael II, Mike C. Contreras, Jessie H. Brionez, Thomas T. Davis, Ivan Spanjol, Larry K. Brown, Frederick Davis, Darl Elliott, John M. Delgado, Darryl Mooneyham, Stanton Molton, Lyle Putty, Alvino Campos, Arnold Gurule, Richard Moore, Joe I. Campos; **Local 14**—James E. Miller, Michael J. Miller, Timothy H. Jacobson, Larry Anagnost, Curtis Adorni; **Local 19**—Richard Groscup, Richard D. Ulrich, Patrick Vukich, James Swinney, Steward P. Smith, Richard Boruch, Robert E. McDonald, Allen Robbins; **Local 21**—Robert Terry, Jimmy Sutherland, Daniel L. White, Frank Reynolds; **Local 23**—Richard Heidal, Robert K. Stephens, Robert Crelling, Ernest Arena Jr, Thomas Mazza, Kerry Engels; **Local 24**—Michael Manenica, Walter D. Wilson, Robert Trader, Harold Copeland; **Local 27**—Clifford Rocheleau, Larry Breitbach, Rodney Getchell; **Local 29**—Joe E. Moreno; **Local 32**—Richard Borsheim,

Harold Pyatte; **Local 34**—John H. Carter, Murray L. Martin, Victor Quevedo, Frank Todaro, Philip Alley, Anthony Boyadzis, Edmond Robertson, Richard Abruzzo, David Cofresi, Ernest Villarico; **Local 40**—Barbara A. Smith; **Local 47**—David Shattuck; **Local 50**—Raymond Hakala, Robert Gaston, Howard Corder, Charles Reneke; **Local 51**—Wayne Mekalsen; **Local 52**—Richard C. Carver, Dennis J. Santos, Harold Thomas; **Local 63**—Edmond Blau, Jon Jeter, Andrew Simich, Terry Goolsby, Ramon Rendon, William Rhodes, Robert Mack, Robert Collins, Carl Marsch, Linda Palacios, Michael Mavar Jr., Sandra Murchison, Geraldine Hoff, William Forrester; **Local 91**—Roger L. Davis, Niles W. Larson, Anthony Machado; **Local 92**—Thomas H. Thompson Jr., Michael Herron; **Local 94**—Anthony Bivinetto, Howard Hopkins, Roy Howard; **Local 98**—Harold Hokanson, Dennis McCauley, Isaac Morro II, Jack Block.

### DECEASED:

**Local 4**—Charles Haluapo Jr. (Georgiana); **Local 8**—William Anderson (Ann), John Knoth (Dorothea), Carl Plitz (Vigreen), Martin Kirstine (Gertrude), Raymond Ramey, Chester Colton, John Knoth, Ronald Jacobson, Gordon Gonnuscio (Donna), Patrick Stanton (Joyce), John Ragni, Edward Peterson; **Local 10**—Augustus Collins (Dorothy), Lillard Ivory (Pearl), Jesse Davis (Flossie), Alberto Curiel (Maria), Andy Mullany, August Motta, Eugene Bailey,

Smuel Bennett (Pauline), Joe L. Johnson (Yvonne), James Robinson (Syndey), James Montana (Cheryl), Alfonso Metzgar, Jack Zenkel; **Local 12**—Axel Potman (Myrta), Donald Abell (Betty), Robert Chiene, Kenneth Ueland (Nadine), Eugene Bailey; **Local 13**—Rafael Gutierrez (Lupe), Edmond Mendoza (Hope), Raymond McGill (Genevieve), Lionel Hawkins (Alice), Steven Bassett (Sherry), Eric Whithurst (Denice), Nick Zuvela (Danica), Sam Lively (Evelyn), Bobby Lackey (Irene), Anthony Brajcich (Michelle), Jack West (Jeannie), Manuel J. Horta, Francis Brooks, Martin Eldan, William Perich, Mathew Tipich (Phyllis), Jack Merriott, Lorna F. Walker; **Local 18**—Jeff Raymond; **Local 19**—Raymond Fox (Jeanette), Guillermo C. Garcia (Jane), Albert D. Johnson, Patrick Brady, James Bulis (Belle), Clifford Feeney; **Local 21**—Clement Telles (Barbara), Milton Ramsey; **Local 23**—Harvey Lay; **Local 24**—Pearl Stutzman, Bernard P. McNamara; **Local 29**—Raul Frias (Jacqueline), Rafael Franco (Beatrice); **Local 34**—Robert Semichy (Shirley), Leonard Brown (Janice), Edward Pulliam, Takefumi Mineishi (Janet); **Local 40**—Oscar Gustafson (Helen); **Local 46**—Mike Tinoco (Carmen), Shirley Holloway (Lou); **Local 47**—Albert Zahn; **Local 50**—Glenn Weygandt (Yvonne); **Local 52**—David Tomlinson, Harold Sharp; **Local 63**—Frank L. Henning Sr., Luverne Loveridge, Joseph Scala (Carolyn), Clyde Kaufman (Marilyn), Scott Hegger (Lisa), John Young, Eddie G. Brown; **Local 75**—Joe B.

Mullen (Sumi); **Local 91**—Russell Lau (Linda); **Local 92**—Fred Trachsel (Mary Jane); **Local 94**—Richard Brand Jr. (Victoria), Leroy French. (Survivors in parenthesis.)

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 8**—Irene Fuesser, Louise Erickson; **Local 10**—Helen Pedersen, Frances Olivera, Margaret Forni, Mabel James, Antonia Campanario, Helen W. Johnson, Florence Culbertson, Gladys Ting; **Local 12**—Edna Hamlin, Naomi Bailey, Arnell Harris, Lola Martin, Noveline Madison; **Local 13**—Lonnie Tolliver, Helen Iacono, Mary Shortridge, Margaret Van Mulligan, Louise Crowder, Eula Loftis, Maria Hurtado, Ida Murry, Mary Rios, Theresa Alvarez, Margaret Phillipi, Frances Oro, Virginia Giblin, Gloria Pendleton, Doris Vaughn; **Local 19**—Ruth Ward, Marion L. Smith, Loretta King, Jessie Kenney; **Local 23**—Bonnie Baydo, Esther Shelberg, Mauretta Bergman; **Local 24**—Elve Johnson, Gertrude Jones, Maxine McCormack; **Local 25**—Norma Rowell; **Local 32**—Vivian G. Stevens; **Local 34**—Hildred Hantel, Gladys Leighton, Merle Miner, Mathilda Scaletta, Ann Dawson, Jacquelyn Kiernan; **Local 50**—Erma Corder; **Local 54**—Veronica Patzer, Opal Jones, Juanita Lafever, Margaret M. Thompson; **Local 63**—Lillian Owings, Margaret Seery; **Local 91**—Carmelita Jensen, Dorothy Nunes, Agnes Pahland; **Local 92**—Bernice Larson, Adeline Thornton; **Local 94**—Sarah Salem, Mildred Thwaites; **Local 98**—Paulette Prock.

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Books and videos about the ILWU are available from the union’s library at discounted prices!

BOOKS:

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- The Big Strike** By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. **\$6.50**
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- The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938** By Harvey Schwartz: new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union’s organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. **\$9.00**

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- Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges** A 17-minute VHS video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorializes Harry Bridges through still photographs, recorded interviews, and reminiscences. Originally produced for the 1990 memorial service in San Francisco. **\$28.00**

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