Local 10 recalls the fight against apartheid

ILWU members carried the fight to the battleground states

Teamster port trucker organizer assassinated in El Salvador
Local 10 commemorates anti-apartheid boycott

by Tom Price

Local 10 members and friends remembered the Henry Schmidt room at the local hall Dec. 3 to remember the union’s struggle against racism in South Africa. Twenty years before, the Nedlloyd vessel Kimberly, owned by Piers 80 in San Francisco for 10 days while rank-and-file longshore workers refused to discharge its South African cargo. At that time, the white minority government of South Africa maintained a vicious system of racial separation that was regarded as a foolproof police state.

Each crew dispatched refused to work the vessel. Word spread along the Coast, and the growing movement against South Africa’s racism took heart from the actions of the workers. Arriving on strike at the University of California, Berkeley, operated the steps of the administration building, the protesters built a shanty town, which they occupied until brutally removed by the campus police. ILWU International officers Jimmy Herman, Rudy Rubio and Carl Kjaer attended their rally.

Even former ILWU President Harry Bridges came out of retirement to join the demonstration. The demonstrators demanded the university rid itself of investments in companies that made profit off the institutional racism.

“Local 10’s struggle against apartheid began in 1968 with the Chavez Ranch strike, the ILWU's International Convention in 1971, 1980’s International strike, and at that time Regional Director, Local 10 retiree Lee Robinson, a veteran of the boycott, told gathering. “He belonged to the United Nations Congress of Black workers' organization, and raised the question of apartheid, the first time it appeared in the proceedings of the ILWU.

Robinson and former Local 10 member Larry Wright (now in bosses’ Local 801) and Hendrik van der Zee, a clerk’s Local 34’s Eddie Gutierrez and Local 10 retirees Herb Mills and Howard Kaylor and other veterans attended the celebration. Local 10 BA Jack Heyman chaired the event. Most of the books stamped for credit.

The union’s history against apartheid is now in a book. The Longhorne Cuscaus called for a boycott of South Africa in 1962 and in December of that year Local 10 members refused to cross a NAACP picket line protesting apartheid cargo on the Dutch ship Eki. Two years later the union opposed political trials of black South African dockers. The ILWU’s International Convention in 1973 called for strict economic sanctions on South Africa to “take the profit out of racism and the employment of slave labor.”

In January 1977 the hapless Kimberly was sold out to a foreign company when she arrived in San Francisco with South African cargo. “There’s a line of people right in the line thrown up around Pier 27 on Easter Sunday, and we didn’t work it,” Robinson told those attending the Local 10 members from the community showed up so we stood down on health and safety.”


But for all Americans with a shred of decency have understood that the situation—in which a tiny minority of white settlers self-righteously control the destiny of millions of blacks, totally excluding them from power—could not go on forever even though the whites had created what seemed to be a foolproof police state.

Everyone knows that it is bound to fall…The only question, really, was would the white South Africans have the good sense to give up gracefully in order to minimize bloodshed.”

Cracks began appearing in the apartheid system in the late 80s. Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for 27 years, was released Feb. 1990. One of the first things he did was thank the ILWU, and he became honorary member of Local 10 in June 1990. He was elected South African president in 1994. Apartheid was abolished.

ILWU contingent marches through UC Berkeley’s Sproul Plaza as part of the anti-apartheid demonstrations of 1984. In front of the banner (left to right) then-International Secretary-Treasurer Curtis McClain, International President Jimmy Herman and International Vice-President Rudy Rubio.

Progressives must battle the Social Security myths of Bush regime

By Mark Gruenberg

PAL Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—With partial privatization of Social Security a top goal for George W. Bush and Republicans next year, a panel of economic experts said progressives must debunk right-wing myths about the program—and raise financial questions about privatization that Bush and the GOP avoid. At the Nov. 18 symposium at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think-tank, they offered different ideas on how to do so.

Social Security privatization, featuring diversion of one-sixth of its annual payroll tax revenues into Wall Street-managed “private investment accounts,” is one big item on Bush’s agenda.

The day of the symposium, Senate Majority Whip Mitch McConnell (R-KY) continued to push the Bush myth. “The Social Security system is a speeding train heading for a brick wall, and must be set right for future generations,” he said on the Senate floor.

But privatization costs at least $2 trillion—to pay for benefits for seniors and about-to-be-seniors—and the right wing is avoiding the implications of that expense, the panel said.

Even more, they pointed out, Social Security does not need to be “fixed” because it is not—not contrary to what the right says —running out of money. That’s one myth they said progressives must dispel.

“They have the fundamental confidence in the system that’s the biggest thing,” said Tamar Frankelpin, director of Social Security Policy Project.

First, we have to get the basic facts out,” said Dean Baker of the Center for Economic Policy and Research. “The Social Security shortfall is modest”—less than one percent of gross domestic product—and will not be fully felt until at least 2043, after most Baby Boomers die. That impact is less than the new defense spending over the last four years, Bush not.

Another myth Baker blasted is the claim that investing Social Security proceeds in the stock market, as advocated by Bush and his allies, will give large returns. He said Bush projects a seven percent annual return on investment of Social Security’s money, channeled through the private accounts, from the stock market.

But the market’s long-term return, Baker noted, is at most five percent. Economist Christian Weller added brokers’ fees would take 20 to 30 percent of the money flowing to private accounts.

Besides the negatives of the Bush-GOP privatization plan, the panel said Social Security’s defenders must also stress its positives, which privatization threatens.

They include the system’s progressivity, which Congressional Black Caucus Foundation economist Maya Rockefeller said particularly aids lower-income groups, notably women and minorities. Other plusses are its universality, its guaranteed income and its guaranteed cost of living increases, all of which are lacking in private pension plans, Weller noted.

“Disadvantaged people will have a triple or quadruple whammy from privatization,” in the form of higher taxes to pay for the transition costs, less progressivity, a higher retirement age which cuts out African-Americans who on average die sooner than whites, and lower benefits, Rockefeller added.

“A lot of the individual account (privatization) proposals blow up the program in order to save it,” added Brookings Institution fellow Peter Orszag. Progressives must get that message out, he said.

But the four differed on how to do so, even as Rockefeller pointed out that privatization backers will have the next six months in the GOP-run Congress for their scare tactics.

“Our most important job is to get people the facts. Right now, we have most of the public thinking that in 10 or 20 years Social Security won’t be there,” Baker said.

Rockefeller noted putting Social Security money in the stock market “is sexy and captures attention” but “is not an alternative. But she said taking the message that Social Security does not need a major overhaul means getting outside the Beltway.

“We deal with national organizations here and assume they’re reaching out to their affiliates,” she added.

“But those organizations have to lean on their grass-roots operations, so that we can shut down the Capitol Hill switchboards with phone calls from irate folks.”

Orszag and Miller advocated educating the media. Both said media outlets are uncritically reporting the right-wing myths and pro-privatization campaign, without asking questions about how to pay for Bush’s partial privatization plan.

“We need to educate women’s groups and younger people,” Weller added, since both also benefit from Social Security.
Teamster organizer assassinated in El Salvador

By David Bacon

A

daylight evening fell on Nov. 5, Gilberto Soto received a call on his cell phone at his mother’s home in a working-class neighborhood in Usulutan, El Salvador. Unable to understand the caller, Soto stepped out of his house to get better reception.

In the street outside three men lay dead. Two of them ran up to Soto and shot him in the back, and then fled in a car and bicycle as Soto examined the bullets in his pouch.

Soto was taken to a local clinic, where he died shortly afterwards.

A day earlier, on a Salvadoran street—an assassination by anonymous murderers who then vanished—is not unusual for the U.S. union leader, where violent and sudden death have been a plague for decades, through a bloody civil war and even into a new era of supposed peace. But Soto’s death was no ordinary assassination, nor someone settling some old political score.

Although he’d been a supporter of the FMLN after leaving his country in 1975, this was not the likely reason why three thugs pumped bullets into him as he stood on his mother’s doorstep.

Chuck Mack, president of International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 7 in California and Director of the union’s Port Division, figures Soto was murdered in his new work. It was part of a new Teamsters international campaign to organize port truck drivers, who ferry shipping containers to and from Maersk vessels.

Soto had returned to his native country just days before. His visit to his mother’s house early that morning was brief, prelude to a series of meetings he’d set up before leaving the U.S. In calls to El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras Soto had sought to contact harbor drivers, who ferry shipping containers to and from the ships in port.

This was an extension of his work for the Teamsters in the U.S. For the last four years Soto and other Teamster organizers have sought to build ties with U.S. drivers who do the same job, often for the same shipping companies that employ their coworkers in Central America.

In El Salvador port drivers have a long history of fighting Maersk, the corporation that has resisted the organizing efforts of truckers around the world more than any other. Three years ago, a hundred drivers for Bridge International Transport (BIT) were fired when they tried to win a union contract, and their organization was destroyed. BIT is owned by Maersk, and hires the drivers who deliver the containers to the company’s container ships as they sit at the dock.

The terminations made big political waves. After a Teamster organizer at the port, Gilberto Soto, was assassinated in 1999, the Danish shipping giant Maersk quickly settled for a $17 million class-action suit.

In its campaign to help the Salvadoran workers, the ITF organized other meetings with Maersk employees from many countries. At one meeting, U.S. Teamster leaders Chuck Mack and Ron Carver heard for themselves about the price paid by those in Central America who opposed the Danish conglomerate.

Hundreds of drivers do the same labor in the U.S., ferrying the containers to and from Maersk vessels. These workers, however, aren’t employed directly by the company or its subsidiaries. Instead, they own their own trucks, or at least they do in theory. In actual fact, they’re heavily indebted to banks and finance companies that loan them money to purchase their rigs. The drivers have to pay all the costs of operating them—diesel fuel, insurance, parking charges—everything.

By the time the bills are paid, the average take-home earning for a driver is $8.9 an hour, making them the lowest-paid big-rig drivers in the U.S. It is a huge group, numbering 50,000-55,000 people nationally. Some 12,000 work in the port of Los Angeles/Long Beach alone, with about 3100 in Oakland, 1800 in Portland, and 2800 in Tacoma/Sieattle, according to Bob Lansbay, a Teamsters port organizer.

Every morning, harbor truckers bid for the right to pick up a container from a Mexican subsidiary like Pacific Rim Transport International, HUDD, or BIT. If the dispatcher gives them the go-ahead, they have to park their truck in front of a terminal to pick it up or drop it off. Dozens of rigs in huge lines, the drivers idling at the front of the gates to the docks before they open every morning, in ports from coast to coast. By the time their day ends, most drivers have put in as many as 16-18 hours.

But because they’re owner-operators, these workers have no rights under much of U.S. labor law, including no right to overtime pay. They’re not covered by wage and hour protection since they supposedly work for themselves. They only have worker’s compensation if they buy their own policy, an expense most can’t afford. And most importantly, the National Labor Relations Board says they’re not workers at all, and therefore aren’t covered by the laws that protect the right to form unions. In fact, the federal government says that if drivers even try to agree with each other on a price to charge the shipping companies for carrying a container, they’re in violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, passed originally to restrain monopoly corporations. The fines and jail time they might incur by violating the act would break any self-employed truck driver.

“This is what deregulation did to port truckers in the late 1970s and early 1980s,” Mack explained. “Their conditions are at the bottom of those for all truck drivers. It’s basically the exploitation of an immigrant work-force, one that doesn’t have much in the way of a voice.”

Soto himself was not a harbor driver, although in ports like Los Angeles hundreds of his fellow countrymen are. Instead, when he arrived in the U.S. in 1975, he got work as a garbage collector, a waiter and cook, and a factory worker—nothing like his career as a bank teller in El Salvador.

Finally he landed a job in a factory where the Teamsters had a contract. He became a shop steward, and then was elected president of Local 11, the first Latino to head a Teamster local in New Jersey. He later went to work as an organizer for Hospital and Healthcare Employees Local 1199 SEIU, returning to the Teamsters as a business agent, and then international organizer, four years ago.

In the meantime, he put himself first through community college, and then earned a bachelor’s degree in political science.

Soto joined the group of Teamsters organizers helping port drivers around the country. They began to organize a national network, despite enormous legal obstacles. For the last decade, the efforts to form unions or bargain, drivers have nevertheless organized associations and strikes, working around the legal system.

They have been able to do so because they avoid the need to deal with them. These efforts have escalated as oil companies began raising the price of diesel fuel to unheard-of levels, cutting deeply into drivers’ income.

Maersk soon became notorious for punishing workers who helped organize these protests. In 2000, in Oakland, California Naim Sharifi, an Afghan university graduate, began petitioning for price adjustments to compensate for fuel costs. Sharifi, who died three months ago, called himself “one of the top drivers” for Maersk’s PRTI. The company rejected the workers’ petition, and eventually the drivers organized a brief work stoppage. Afterwards, Sharifi said, “I knew I was in trouble. Management had a different attitude toward me.”

In September that year, the Teamsters organized a rally in the port to protest the bad conditions, and Sharifi spoke for the drivers. As he did so, PRTI officials looked on, an act that would constitute illegal surveillance if the workers had rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

The next day they called me into the office and cancelled my contract,” Sharifi remembered. “They said, ‘We don’t have to give you a reason. We don’t need a reason.’”

When the ITF planned a series of continued on page 7
ILWU mobilization carried the fight for Kerry

By Tom Price

ILWU members and retirees from all divisions took weeks or months off work to fight corporate power in key election states. About 300 participated in the union’s expanded Nov. 2 election campaign by traveling to Ohio, Nevada, Iowa and Wisconsin. Others stayed in their own states and helped secure them for Kerry and win many local races.

The commitment to participate in the elections had been made at all levels of the ILWU as far back as the 2002 longshore contract struggle. The 2003 International Convention made the defeat of the Bush regime its major priority. That was followed up by action at the Longshore Caucus last spring where the Coast Legislative Action Committee recommended a large-scale siege of the “battleground states,” those states where there was no clear leader in the race for the presidency. Members from all branches of the union responded, packed their bags and off they went.

Peter Peyton, co-chair of the Coast Legislative Action Comm., stayed behind to coordinate the effort. The members organized themselves into 11 teams and divided up the work of calling on union members in the battleground states.

“Because our job is to unload a ship, that means we get people together, get paper work, move move move. We’re probably better organized than most people at getting things done,” said Peyton, who also serves as secretary of marine clerks’ Local 63.

Local 63’s Connie Chaney worked in Columbus, Ohio. She expressed shock at what had happened to the middle of the country during the last few years, especially during the last four.

“Right now there are some very angry working class people out there and they don’t understand what’s happening,” Chaney said. “What I saw was something I’ve never seen in my 54 years on planet Earth. Poverty right here in America is as bad as what we see across the water on TV. These are people who have worked all their lives for a decent retirement, for a wage and a means for their children, and it’s all been flushed.”

Chaney saw the effects of corporate globaliza-

John Kerry ignored his security to take a picture with an ILWU team. Left to right: Edward Jeffrey, Local 63; Kerry; Marc Anthony Cuevas, Local 54; Louis Hill, Local 54; James Long, Local 63.

tion up close and personal. Ohio lost about 250,000 jobs during the first Bush term. Three-quarters of those jobs were in the manufacturing sector. Another 11,800 workers lost their jobs in August.

“I did a lot of canvassing,” she said. “A lot of a lot of canvassing,” she said. “A lot of people wanted to phone bank, but I didn’t want them to think I was just another solicitor on the phone. It was more fulfilling to talk to somebody to face-to-face.”

Chaney would finish her list of 40 union house-

holds and hurry back for more.

“I’ve seen peoples’ houses with the door knobs hanging off the door, windows busted out in freez-

ing weather,” she said. “It wasn’t a bunch of kids out partying that knocked the windows out. Older people lived there. My thought was ‘What are these people going to do when it gets colder?’ I talked to people forced off their jobs before it was time to retire and their medicals all shot up. I couldn’t believe this was happening in America.”

“I saw college-degree children working in McDonald’s. They were thrilled to have a job. I think he said he made $8 an hour. I saw kids saving their money so they could move out of Ohio and get a good job and send money back to their families.”

“They don’t know what to do,” she said. “They have a lack of trust in everything because they’ve been lied to.”

Rather than despair, Chaney brought a new resolve back with her to Los Angeles.

“I was hurt by seeing Americans living like that,” she said. “I did not believe it, and I was a social worker with the county [Los Angeles] before I came to the waterfront. I thought I had heard every sad story, but there you didn’t hear it, you saw it. It gave me the oomph to come back home and resolve back with her to Los Angeles.

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Carlos Torres, out of warehouse Local 6, went to Ohio’s Montgomery County.

“It was a great experience and I wouldn’t hesi-
tate to do it again,” Torres said. “We were two weeks in a place called Fairborn, outside Dayton. The town only had 32,000 people. For that small town, we had 150 people from different AFL-CIO unions. The place was so inundated with campaign- ing that people were fed up, not only were union people calling them, but Republicans and special interest groups were calling them, knocking on their doors. They were really fed up, many said ‘don’t call me, don’t knock.’

Torres serves on the Local 6 Executive Board and is a trustee and a shop steward at his house. He’s a 20-year veteran of the union.

“The timing was a problem,” Torres said. “If we and the AFL-CIO had been out there for earlier to get people registered, it would have been better. We were trying to get the undecided, but most of them had made up their minds. I think Kerry’s campaign had forgotten that a lot of these people had their union meetings in churches, the church-

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right to the battleground states

ing. They were so union at heart. One of the good things in Reno is that the local people who supported labor got elected. On any given day we had 200 union people in the hall, you’d hear ‘Are you coming back in two years for the Senate race?’

Tuck also had a lot of ILWU support already in place in Reno.

‘Joe Wenzl [Coast Committeeman] sent me a list of active and retired ILWU members in the Reno area,’ Tuck said. ‘I sent out 60 letters asking for their help. My first call was from the daughter of a woman 80 years old. She said her mother couldn’t get out of bed, but if she could she would be right with us. Another retiree had Parkinson’s disease. He said he couldn’t talk much on the phone, but he could still stuff envelopes.’

Tuck spent 17 days in Arkansas two years ago working on the Senate race for Mark Pryor.

‘I was in Reno one week shy of three months, started off slow, six days a week, eight to 10 hours, in the end it was 18 hours a day.’ Tuck said. ‘I wasn’t the only one, we were all running on empty. I was really proud of how hard everyone worked. I left there a better person for it.’

Ted Sadler, from longshore Local 13, went home to Cleveland as captain of his traveling team.

‘In the two-and-a-half weeks I probably talked to close to 1,000 people, through canvassing, meeting union people and envelope stuffing,’” Sadler said. ‘I saw the poverty in the area.

‘They lost 250,000 jobs in Ohio and you can see it in their faces. There’s some really tough, young people, but there’s a lot of people in their fifties, and they’re laid off and where are they going to?’

Sadler felt he was bringing something back home with his ILWU buddies.

‘The ILWU, as the socially conscious union that it is, has once again risen to the occasion. However effectively within the framework of the election, fighting for a vote, we did some good, young people, but there’s a lot of people in their fifties, and they’re laid off and where are they going to?’

Sadler was really proud of how hard everyone worked. I left there a better person for it.”

Emilei Noceti

Southern California Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (right) joins longshore Local 13 members Socorro Fimbres (left) and Angel Blanco in Las Vegas to get out the vote.
Soto assassinated continued from page 3

- 20 nationwide rallies highlighting Sharifi’s termination the following year, and all the participants”, said the attorney who represented the plaintiff.
- “The worst retaliation has come in the form of blacklisting and lockouts.”
- “We’re recognizing with these multinational corporations that we cannot deal with them effectively even nationally.”
- “Soto’s job was to help a group of these workers with no rights, against a company with a long track record of opposing any of their efforts to organize.”
- “Well, not exactly. Somebody was threatened enough to murder him.”

### ShopUnionMade.org

By now the holiday shopping frenzy has reached maddening levels. The stores are jammed with cheap imports if you can even get a place to park. You might even end up at Wal-Mart! But you can avoid all that and find the Union Label in cyberspace at [www.ShopUnionMade.org](http://www.ShopUnionMade.org).

What to get for that right-wing brother-in-law? How about some union coffee? From the site you can order 100 percent union coffee from Hawaii. How about a union-made computer? Same site. How about union coffee? From the site you can order 100 percent union coffee from Mexico. And we have union-made computer monitors and robes. And union airlines to take you to the nearest embarkation port.

Orders can be sent via UPS, a Teamster outfit, directly to whoever you want to surprise.

The AFL-CIO’s Union Label and Service Trades Dept. launched the site Sept. 7. Its secretary treasurer, Matt Bates, explained why the site needed.

“Shoppers spent $56 billion in Internet sales last year,” Bates said in a press release. “The web site will reach millions of people, 24-hours a day, with a quick and convenient way to shop union. The public is ready for this, people have seen millions of good jobs disappear and they are looking for ways to take a stand and make a difference.”

The AFL-CIO is sponsoring a “Buy Union Week” Nov. 26 through Dec. 5 and will make the site a corner stone of that campaign.

### ILWU Book & Video Sale

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

**BOOKS:**
- The ILWU Story: unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and in the voices of rare, action-packed posters.
- The Big Strike: By Mike Quinn: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. $6.50
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- We Are the ILWU A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about what the union meant in their lives and what it needs to survive and thrive, along with film clips, historical photos and an original musical score. $15.00
- Life on the Beam: A Memoir 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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Prices include shipping and handling. Please allow at least four weeks for delivery. Shipment to U.S. addresses only.
Ex-Docker writes British rust bowl saga

by M.J. Carden


reviewed by Chris Carlsson

This novel is set in a small shipbuilding factory in England in the early 1970s. It begins with a young man, terribly displaced after years of rote, mind-numbing schooling, getting a job from the local employment office and showing up to work with a cautious enthusiasm about his new adulthood. In very short time he is introduced to the insanity and brutality that rules the roost in this particular factory, a perverted dehumanization that is the norm of factory life.

I had the pleasure of meeting the author, and even staying at his house in Liverpool for a few days, back in 1999. Carden was one of the main organizers of an ultimately unsuccessful effort to protect the unionized dockworkers of Liverpool. In that capacity he had plenty of chances to see the men and women he represents, lenders to the workers' direct action, ultimately seizing the factory and occupying it.

In this story, the daily brutality directed by the shop steward and his loyal followers against a worker who didn’t fit in (but was one of the most skilled and productive), leads a worker ultimately to a gory suicide. The union's local leader and his men scab on the wildcat strike, a corrupt lout named McCabe, depart the factory for his new adulthood. In very short time he is introduced to the insanity and brutality that rules the roost in this particular factory, a perverted dehumanization that is the norm of factory life.

“apprentice” as he is seduced by a local “apprentice,” speaks out and sparks a conflict, enflaming the consciences of the rest of the workforce who can no longer tolerate the pigheaded mean-spiritedness of the factory’s “leaders.” Against the violence of their own shop stewards and shop stewards, the owners, managers and union leaders, the workers go on strike. Thanks to the rank and file experienced leadership of an old hand, who had been a union leader but had withdrawn from union politics in disgust long ago, and the rock solid union’s support. More often than not new workers engage in a factory occupation, a crucial and largely forgotten tactic in the workers' arsenal is reintroduced to a new generation. Carden does not refrain from occasional political analysis masquerading as fictionally prose. He ruminates: “The system would never tolerate strikes or any other acts of defiance but they positively encouraged wage-slavery. Occupation was a rebellion that faced up the power of capital by captur- ing its paws, and as such it could never be tolerated. Occupation was never about money, it was about chal- lenging the very essence of the capital- ist's power. To challenge capitalism over money was to play their game. It was perfectly acceptable, tolerated and even welcomed as a vindication of capital’s all- enveloping greed. Everyone, in this con- text, could be seen as a capitalist. To want money and want more money was a gerruation to capital and its ways. Occupation was a profit. But only those workers knew what they were involved in. Above all they were practical people. They could build canals in the desert.”

By the time the story reaches its climax, which is far from heroic or satisfying for fans of workers’ revolt, Carden finally discloses his deeper analysis of trade unionism: “Trade unionism was in its most influen- tial phase, so some said, and yet the seeds of future treachery [which Carden and his mates had to face in the 1990s] had been sown from inception. A constant struggle ensued between the leadership and the led. Petty feuds and routine sexism gave way to camaraderie and mutual respect sprinkled amidst the machinations of the shop stewards’ machinery. As a result, those who revolted this time are van- ished. The plan to “offshore” the workers evident of the Paul Schrader movie “Blue Collar,” the possibilities of revolt seem diminished, the individu- als who revolted this time are van- quished. The plan to “offshore” the workers evident of the Paul Schrader movie “Blue Collar,” the possibilities of revolt seem diminished, the individu-

That may be Carden’s most important point. Things cycle, specific individuals and conditions change, but the deeper logic is still as iron- clad as it was in the period his novel describes. The post-Fordist world is still as difficult and contradictory and con- flicted and often defeated as his book so ably illustrates. But there is a way out. And we do learn. And books like this are important contributions to that process, best known as history.
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