SoCal grocery workers accept troublesome pact
page 7

Ike Morrow: Tacoma’s legendary “Soul Train Engineer”
page 8-9

Powell’s gets new contract, saves health care
page 3

INSIDE
Washington Report: Bush’s budget is another lie p. 4
Dockers fight privatization in Bangladesh, The Netherlands p. 10
Outlawing Vertical Tandem Lifts p. 12
Everyday Terror: The national insecurity state p. 13
The employers’ plan to shred the longshore contract

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

I think ratifying a contract with longshore employers that guarantees ILWU jurisdiction is a lock on your job, think again. There are very serious shipping and stevedoring companies that make up the Pacific Maritime Association—the employer group under contract with the ILWU—are setting up another organization designed to make an end run around your legal contract and undermine your job. The ILWU contract developed through decades of wrestling with the employers. Our first contract that established the union after the great strike of 1934 brought us the dispatch hall and protections against unfair and unsafe conditions on the job. The employers didn’t stop assault on our dispatch halls until we won the bitter strike of 1948. Then the employers reorganized as the Pacific Maritime Association and agreed to our system of cooperation and arbitration. But today the PMA is moving away from those past commitments to the ILWU. The days the union could work with the employers to build a better industry for everyone seem far away. A faction within the PMA is trying to frustrate the 2002 contract settlement and undermine it in new and devious ways.

The organization this faction has set up is called the West Coast Marine Terminal Operators Discussion Agreement. They have to call themselves a “Discussion group” and get approval to meet from the Federal Maritime Commission in order to avoid prosecution under federal anti-trust laws. But it’s not as if all they were doing was getting together and talking about matters of mutual concern. They are already moving those discussions into ways to violate our jurisdiction, to outsource the work that Section One of our contract defines as ILWU jobs. Without those jobs we will not have the wages, benefits and pensions or a union to defend them. The Discussion group has formally put out to high tech companies a Request For Proposals (RFP) to develop an electronic tag or transponder to be put on each truck that services the terminals. They will have encoded in it all the information the electronic tag or transponder will be able to track the truck rolls past. This transponder, set up outside the ILWU and the contractual obligations, programmed and serviced by non-ILWU companies, will impact clerks’ work at the gate and terminal operations.

A faction within the PMA is trying to frustrate the 2002 contract settlement and undermine it in new and devious ways.

The longshore contract is designed to make an end run around your legal contract and outsource ILWU jobs. For more than a year now PMA has frustrated all our efforts to get the information we need to make that determination. We have had to take them to arbitration several times. Each time we have won. The arbitrator ruled the employers must give us the information on how the technology works because the contract clearly states that was the deal—they get to implement labor-saving technologies as long as we are certain it’s not being done to outsource our jobs.

But the employers’ strategy is what it always has been, as it has been since their first started with virtual computer technology in the 1980s, that is, to use it to hide and outsource our jurisdiction. The only difference now is they are doing it more aggressively and on a larger scale.

Your Coast Committee myself, International Vice President Bob McElrath and Coast Committee members Ray Ortiz, Jr. and Joe Wenzl are stepping up to the challenge and will fight this with every weapon in our arsenal. But the best weapon we have is you—the rank-and-file longshore workers. We need you to be always vigilant when your employer implements new technology. Look to see if there is something suspicious in how it’s being done and report it to your Business Agent so we can investigate it and, if necessary, arbitrate it. And we need you to stand strong and united—longshore workers, clerks and walking bosses. Together we can enforce our contract and beat back this attack of subterfuge and outsourcing.

The Coast Committee is on the move and has an arbitration scheduled for March 24 on the legality of the Discussion group. We are confident we will be sustained in our position and set the employers back for now. But even if we do, this is far from the end of this conflict. The PMA has people whose job is to just figure out ways to violate their contractual obligations. If this one doesn’t work, they’ll come up with another.

But again, we can and will prevail, if we stay alert, strong and united.
local 5 wins health care fight

After fighting for nearly eight months to maintain health benefits, ILWU warehouse, retail and allied Local 5 reached a tentative agreement with Powell's Books March 2. The two sides began meeting five days after the local's independent board came up with a report that called for raising Powell's health care costs, imposing new co-pays on doctor visits and made some prescription drugs six times more expensive than they had been.

Months of traditional and creative mobilizations by Local 5— including a solid unfair labor practice strike on the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year—didn't move management a bit.

Early on, ILWU International Vice President Bob McEllrath and longshore Local 10 representative S.J. Smith were sending cease and desist letters to Powell's after learning the company was planning to drop their health insurance plan. The Powell's board later canceled the meeting, but Powell's responded by doubling monthly premiums, imposed new co-pays on visits to doctors and made some prescription drugs six times more expensive than they had been.

The Powell's contract should provide a shot of encouragement to unionists starved for good news. Local 5 beat back the co-pays for visits to doctors in the PPO group and substantially scaled back the premium increases demanded by management. They got less than the hoped for raise, but will see two percent wage increases in each year of the three-and-a-half year contract.

"We have to fight for health care for all and these contracts are a big part of it," said Portland Jobs with Justice's Leonard Riley told the crowd. "It was a wakeup call for us and our kids and the community, but also for our children and our grandchildren to make ourselves heard, not just for our- selves, but also for our children and the future of our country."

---Tom Price

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams (center), Congressman Barbara Lee (left) and Merritt College President Evelyn West (right) unveiled the new Paul Robeson commemorative stamp at a Black History Month celebration Feb. 18 on the community college campus.

Adams, who had to forego his regular Labor and Black History extravaganza in Tacoma this year because of his new duties as a Titled Officer, was the keynote speaker at the event. Adams told the audience of mostly African American students how Robeson was an actor, singer, athlete, scholar and political activist who performed and spoke against racism and for peace and workers' rights.

"Paul Robeson was a Renaissance man," Adams said. "He excelled in everything he did."

Adams pointed out how Robeson worked for unions and that the ILWU was his favorite union.

"Paul Robeson was an honorary member of the ILWU," Adams said. "He was our bright and shining star."

But during the McCarthy period in the 1950s, the same time Harry Bridges was being prosecuted by the U.S. government, the Powell's board also tried to erase Robeson because of his political beliefs and activism. It banned his music from being played on the radio, barred him from concert halls and removed his name from the Football Hall of Fame where he had been an All-American at Rutgers University.

"It's a shame we honor him now when he's dead," Adams said. "How come we couldn't give him applause when he was with us?"

Congresswoman Lee, who was the sole Representative to vote against giving Bush a blank check for the war in Afghanistan and who has been a leader against the whole Bush agenda, told the audience how she has turned to Robeson's work.

"I have often gone back to the speeches and music of Paul Robeson for inspiration when times get tough," Lee said.

Oakland Postmaster Lawrence Barnes spoke of the significance of a commemorative stamp honoring Robeson.

"Stamps allow us to learn about our past and the world around us," Barnes said. "There's a story behind every commemorative stamp and that's important because history is in the footnotes."

---
Bush lies, proposes dishonest budget

By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

A national budget is a statement about our principles, values and priorities as a nation. On Feb. 3, 2004, President Bush presented his proposed budget to the U.S. Congress. It is a program for creating jobs, to provide health care for Americans and to strengthen public education. It is a program to funnel money to the wealthiest of Americans and supports more “out-sourcing” of America’s future.

Just four years ago, the U.S. had a $230 billion surplus that we were using to strengthen Social Security by paying down America’s debt. Today, we are faced with a budget that is the largest deficit in the history of the U.S. Worse, Bush’s budget is wholly dishonest. Its numbers are cooked for political purposes and it fails to include the out-of-control costs of the military occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bush claims his budget will create jobs. He has to at least pretend it will because he has the worst jobs record since Herbert Hoover. Over the last three years, the U.S. has lost three million jobs. And his projections of jobs created by his policies are at best delusions, at worst, just wishful thinking.

The Bush budget will only make a bad situation worse. It cuts $286 million from transportation and related services, top of the $1.5 billion in cuts to job training and related services he has already made. It also takes funds for adult and dislocated worker programs in block grants to states, jeopardizing the few remaining resources to re-train laid off workers for other occupations.

Two million Americans are expected to exhaust their unemployment benefits before the end of the year. The Republicans refuse to extend these benefits to the needy because they want more money. The President has said that Bush proposes to make his expiring tax cuts permanent at a cost of $1.3 trillion, but his budget budget would give away approximately $1 trillion of tax cuts to the wealthy over the coming months. The bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Tax Cuts and concluded that it not only would fail to cut the deficit in half in five years as Bush claims, but it would actually add another $2.75 trillion to the debt over the next 10 years. And this doesn’t even include the money for the biggest sink hole of Bush policies—the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that began after September 11. The White House has acknowledged it will ask Congress for another $50 billion for the wars after the election.

The only way for Bush to pay for his military ventures and pay off Halliburton and other corpo-

The ILWU Political Action Fund has a goal of raising more than $500,000 to support the ILWU Political Action Fund. The ILWU Political Action Fund is facing a crisis because of the Bush administration’s refusal to release money to maintain the union’s political program.

The ILWU Political Action Fund has a goal of raising more than $500,000 for the union’s work in 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, and are not considered part of your 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 know that if you are a member of the ILWU, you automatically are participating in the union’s political program.

Donations should be sent to:
ILWU-PAF
1188 Franklin St., 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94109
Checks should be payable to: ILWU-PAF.
By Gene Vrana, ILWU Director of Educational Services & Librarian
Photos by Frank Wilder

The ILWU’s Secretary-Treasurers Conference has not fared well under the Bush administration. In 2001 the events of 9/11 interrupted the proceedings and shocked the participants. This year’s edition was burdened by new anti-labor administrative regulations and procedures imposed by Bush.

Yet once again the gathering pulled together to prevail in difficult circumstances and increase their knowledge and skills in order to better carry out their financial and organizational responsibilities for the benefit of the rank and file. Of the 66 participants, 36 were local officers, 21 were trustees, and nine clerical employees—representing 34 locals and IBU regions from Alaska to San Diego, making it by far the most representative group yet to attend a Secretary-Treasurers Conference.

International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams opened the conference by emphasizing the importance of learning how to survive the Bush administration’s anti-labor program, including the increased burden placed on unions by more complicated, time-consuming, and expensive federal regulatory procedures.

He also noted how the conference’s mix of local officers, trustees, and clerical employees continues to be a uniquely ILWU approach to training that enriches the educational and union-building experience of the sessions.

The program was initiated in 1999 to help improve compliance with federal regulations and internal union procedures. Held this year Feb. 2-5 in Palm Springs, California, the hot topics were recent changes to procedures in the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act on LM-2 forms, and procedures controlling political action fundraising that are greatly impacting how the union collects money for its Political Action Fund.

Instructors were a combination of ILWU attorneys, International officers and staff and local union officers.

Participants got a chance to get their hands dirty in an audit workshop set up to help provide the knowledge and skills to fulfill the internal financial obligations of their offices—their “fiduciary responsibility.”

Other topics included clarification of compliance with Beck procedures and case law governing “financial core members,” an overview of compliance with federal regulations, ILWU procedures governing the conduct of union elections and a training session on bookkeeping software increasingly popular among several locals and compatible with electronic filing of government forms.
Photos and interviews by Slobodan Dimitrov

I’ve worked for Von’s for 34 years, and I’ve never gone through anything like this in my life. I raised two children as a single mother. This particular job got me through that. And I’ve always been very, very proud to work for Von’s. It just upsets me so much to see what the corporations are trying to do to the labor force of the United States of America. It scares me, and that’s why I’m standing strong, and I’ll continue standing strong for the labor movement from this moment on.

Kevin Portnall
No one’s really pleased being out here, especially with the company making money hand over fist. Not just Von’s by itself, but all three of them combined. Profits have risen 225 percent over the last 10 years. Let us get back to work. They can also make concessions. In the latest union proposals, we gave in a lot, and they just walked away from the table like we slapped them in the face. They are just trying to bust the union. It’s a disgrace, because from the workers, our high integrity is making them a high profit. I have no complaints on how I’ve been treated over the last 23 and-a-half years. Why all of a sudden do they want all these take-aways now? They’re heartless.

John Fiddler
This strike is not about Wal-Mart. They do not fear Wal-Mart, they’re inspired by Wal-Mart. They want to see us get their [Wal-Mart’s] type of wages, their type of benefits. When I took this job 25 years ago, they promised me the best benefits, the best medical and the best pension program. Now they want to take it away from us. There are over 40 take-aways on the table. They don’t tell the public that. They claim it’s a family-run business, but it’s not. It’s just plain corporate greed, that’s all it’s about.

Lori Rodriguez
I’ve been working for the company for 29 years, and I think this really sucks. I’m about to lose my benefits and my retirement. I just want to go back to work.

Nancy Mehlmauer
We’re doing this to keep affordable health care and to keep this a class industry to be proud of. We want to make sure that the employer maintains the contribution to our pension plan, and not the lower levels they are now offering. I want to retire with a decent pension.

Tanae Sanders
I’m concerned about the older employees who have kids and bills to pay. Myself, I live with my mom, so the effect on me hasn’t been as bad. We broke the record for being out here. We do appreciate all the people who support us by shopping elsewhere.

Jim Griffin
I’m out here to protect my pension and my medical benefits. I’ve been with the company 39 years, but I’m out here for the people behind me to make sure they have a decent living standard and medical benefits. The union has made California what it is, it brought wages up, it’s what made the middle class. Now they are trying to downsize the middle-class. I don’t think it’s right. Everyone is entitled to a decent wage and medical benefits. I don’t want to be on welfare, I don’t want food stamps and I don’t think the State of California and L.A. County should pay for my medical benefits. That’s why I am here, and I think the company owes me that.

John Hunter
I’ve been with company for 34 years, working in produce. As a produce manager, I went through several strikes. This is the worst the retail clerks have ever had, and the longest. We’ll be out here during the whole duration, and we’ll be out here as long as it takes. We’re fighting for our benefits. They want us to make a co-payment that no one can afford. They want to put caps on the medical, make us pay 50 percent of our hospital, doctor and prescription bills. They want to have two-tiered wages. This would devastate the future of our union. We have to stay strong.
SoCal grocery workers accept troublesome pact

By Steve Stallone

Though striking and locked-out grocery store workers in Southern California voted 86 percent to reject a three-year contract over the Feb. 28-29 weekend, they showed more disposition than enthusiasm for the fight.

After nearly five months on the picket lines, with strike pay being reduced, health care declining, and people living in a state of high anxiety and insecurity, the majority had enough.

The UFCW International leaders installed president Joe Hansen (10-year term) and others from 219 locals and suppliers.

But employers will save a bundle and-a-half years before they can buy the benefits offered. To help offset the fund that were depleted during the conflict. It buffers the workers from some of the worst employer proposals—als, but only temporarily. They were forced to accept a two-tier system that will haunt the union and workers' position as time goes on. But the companies took a bit too high, slowly, their demands more contracts expire across the country.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The contract covers more than 70,000 workers at 852 Albertsons, Ralphs and Safeway-owned Von's stores throughout southern California. The main issue of contention—other than the two tiers—was health care.

The grocery workers had long enjoyed 100 percent employer-paid premiums. The employers wanted to slash that and their proposal would have had the workers contributing up to one-third of their net wages in co-payments. Many other labor and community leaders are watching the Southern California fight.

But employers will save a bundle and-a-half years before they can buy the benefits offered. To help offset the fund that were depleted during the conflict. It buffers the workers from some of the worst employer proposals—als, but only temporarily. They were forced to accept a two-tier system that will haunt the union and workers' position as time goes on. But the companies took a bit too high, slowly, their demands more contracts expire across the country.

Current employees, those hired before the contract's ratification, will maintain the same pension and coverage for the first two years. In the third year they will pay up to $6 a month for insurance. Southern California joins the month for employee plus children and $15 per month for employee plus spouse or with children. But they could be paying more for less. If after the first two years the money in the benefit fund is insufficient to cover the increased costs of health care, the contract allows the trustees to reduce the benefits offered. If helped offset this, the employers will contribute $150 million to rebuild the reserves in the fund, which are depleted due to the strike/lockout.

New hires, those employed after the contract ratification, will receive drastically less. The employers' contribution to health care, for example, will be reduced. New hires will get only $5 per month for each covered family member (compared to $3.90 for current employees) and they will have to pay 20 percent of their health care costs. New hires will have higher co-pays as well. Also, the time it would take to achieve the same benefits until they have been employed for a year. They will have to work for two-and-a-half years before they can buy coverage for dependents.

The wage situation is equally dismal. Current employees will see no raises over the life of the three-year agreement, effectively getting a pay cut as the cost of living goes up. They will get a "contract ratification bonus" of about $500 in March and another similar "lump sum bonus" in March. But employers will save a bundle on new hires. Food clerks currently make $17.90 per hour, while new hires in that category will start at $8.90, less than half—and will take four years or more to get to a top scale of $18.18. While the highest new hire makes $19.18 per hour now, a newly hired meatcutter will start at $11.18 and top out at $16.38. At these wages, the 20 percent premium for health care will be a real challenge. The pension situation is worse. Although all vested pension payments will remain, the employers are slashing their contributions and payments. From now on current employees will only accrue pension benefits at 65 percent of their previous rates and new hires will get only 35 percent of that old rate. So where current employees were accruing pension payments at the rate of $51.82 per month per year of service for the first ten years and $69.09 per month per year of service after that, they will now only get $33.70 per month for the first ten years and $44.90 after that. New hires will only accrue $18.14 per month per year of service for the first ten years and $24.19 after that.

New hires will also see much skimpier vacations and holidays. And the union lost some jurisdiction with new language allowing a certain amount of stocking to be done by vendors and suppliers.

The real nastiness of the employers comes through in the way they structured the two tiers. It is not only that new hires after the contract ratification that get the lower tier. Anyone promoted after the ratification, no matter how much seniority they have, will immediately fall into the lower tier. Welcome to 21st century labor relations. When you get promoted, you get demoted.

The union negotiators also signed off on a separate document, a "Labor Dispute Settlement Agreement." Among other things it relies employ- ers from having to abide by their work schedule and hour and scheduling guarantees for the first 21 days back at work and allowing them to do some bargaining unit work during those three weeks. It also allows the companies to terminate workers who "engaged in serious misconduct" during the dispute, defining that as material property damage or bodily injury. The agreement limits those firings to 30 for Von's, 30 for Albertson's and 23 for Ralph's, gave the companies 36 days to identify such people and gives the union the right to arbitrate any such terminations.

**THE FIGHT GOES ON**

UFCW locals throughout North America with contracts expiring in the coming months watched the Southern California conflict closely. They are not conceding the conventional wisdom that the Southern California contract will determine the fate of their negotiations.

"We will not agree to a two-tier system or health care cuts," said Rick Lind, secretary-treasurer of UFCW Local 428 in San Jose, California.

"The Northern California contract expires Sept. 11 and the contract cover- ing Sacramento-area stores expires July 17. The Northern California locals learned something from the conflict in Southern California. They know that we must start early on and build on the momentum generated there through the end of the struggle.

"Bay Area locals have called an organizing meeting for March 14 at ILWU's longshore Local 10's hall with activists from Detroit, Houston, Hawaii, Calgary, the Puget Sound and Baltimore-Washington, D.C. locals that have upcoming negotiations. Many other labor and commu- nity supporters will join them in a rally at Local 10 and a march on Safeway at 2:00 p.m. that afternoon.

"I've got people calling me every day asking what they can do to help," Lind said. "They understand this is not just a grocery workers' struggle.

"The March 14 meeting will be part strategy brainstorming for the coming bargaining and part activist training, said Jim Grogan, a Northern California organizer for the UFCW. He said he anticipates about 1,000 rank-and-file activists will show for the meeting.

"We need a nationally coordinat- ed bargaining strategy," Grogan said. "And we need to train rank and file to be able to talk about issues like two tiers and caps on health care to our co-workers. They hear it better from co-workers."

"Where the locals have always put their energies, they will want to know what they want out of an upcoming contract, this time rank and-file activists will be trained to make the inquiries one-on-one, Lind said.

"And we are going to take the next step with the questions and ask how much they are willing to do to get what they want," Lind said. "We are going to tie actions to the demands."

The UFCW Local 10 leaders have been invited to the March 14 meeting. There's hope that newly appointed acting President Doug Dority retired two days after the Southern California contract was ratified will be more actively engaged in the upcoming battles.

"Hopefully we can get more coop- eration from the International," Grogan said. "We need someone to help unite the clans and Hansen could play that role.

"The task at hand is now organizing the union's strengths and exploit- ing the companies' weaknesses.

"This is a protracted fight and we need to figure out how to keep pres- sure on the employers in different ways," Grogan said.

"Part of that will be enforcing the contract on the shop floor, like making sure vendors don't do the clerks' work."

Part of that will be public pressure, building on the high-profile demonstra- tions and media work done in Southern California. They are doing it now in support of the whole Southern California fight. Local Central Labor Councils and the California Labor Federation are geared up for the fight and the AFL-CIO's field staff are lining for another shot at the companies.

"What the Southern California locals were doing eight weeks into the strike, we're already doing now," Lind said.

"The UFCW organizers know that the grocery companies lost more than $2 billion in sales in Southern California even though there wasn't a statewide or national boycott in force and that rattled the stockholders. So now there's talk of beginning to organize an effective boycott of the stores. In the next few months UFCW will get politicians, unions and com- munity and faith groups to sign peti- tions pledging to boycott if necessary, and then they are ready to move in short order.

"We will have that all lined up and then say to the companies, 'if you even put two-tier systems or caps on health care on the table, we will pull the boycott,"' Grogan said.


Andrew Dovell
Ike Morrow presides over his domain at the North Intermodal Yard

Introduction by Harvey Schwartz

In honor of Black History Month, February’s oral history profiles Isaac (“Ike” Morrow, a leg- endary figure on the Tacoma waterfront who just retired January 31. Morrow, a tough, hard- working realist with a powerful streak of kindli- ness, was the original inspiration behind the Port of Tacoma’s unique straddle carrier-driven North Intermodal Yard. He started on the waterfront in Local 23 during the early 1960s, became a Local 68 foreman in 1972, and a Port of Tacoma Terminal Foreman in 1981.

Morrow was a black father to a new genera- tion of Black and White longshore workers. He was awarded a handsome plaque for this service by Tacoma’s African American Longshoremen’s Association in the 1980s. In applauding his con- tribute to the waterfront community, the plaque’s inscription characterized him as “head engineer of the soul train” in a reference to his influence and to the celebrated fact that his four longshore sons then worked for him.

I interviewed Morrow in late January, during his last week on the waterfront. From the tower that served as his command center overlooking the North Intermodal Yard that he helped create, he tirelessly aided my work and even arranged a strud ride for me with one of his top drivers, Daryll Dixon. Here is Morrow’s story.

ISAAC (IKE) MORROW

Edited by Harvey Schwartz, Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

I was born in a little place called Frogsville Bottom Bottom. My dad was a rice picker, my mom was a sharecropper. My family was sharecroppers, but by World War II my dad couldn’t survive sharecropping and he couldn’t find other work in Oklahoma. He came north when he was recruited to work at the Hanford nuclear project in Eastern Washington. His first day there he worked mixing construction mud. He had no idea what the Hanford project was, but he knew he was making more money than the nothing he was making in Oklahoma.

The real beginning for our family was Eastern Washington. My dad was special. It took him almost two years to get his whole family up north. He had five kids, just like I did. I was brought north when I was four or five years old. My dad would get a little money and drive south, and in those days, if you were Black, you didn’t stop at a Motel 6 or nothing like that. You’d stop for gas and keep going.

It took my dad three trips to bring his whole family north. He taught me many things, like how to deal with discrimination and responsibility. He said, “If you’re man enough to make a baby, you’ve got to be man enough to take care of a baby.” And that’s what he did. He didn’t just leave us down south.

My dad taught me how to deal with discrimina- tion, too. He said, “Don’t cry about discrimination. You look at the mirror in the morning. You know you’re Black, and therefore you have a problem. Your job is to figure a way to get around that prob- lem. You get to go over it, around it, or through it, or sometimes you got to put it on its ass.” That was my daddy. I’ve lived my life by that rule. In other words, I didn’t turn everything into a Black and White issue. If you didn’t like me, I dealt with it, and I never used anything for an escape.

Dad always had at least two jobs, maybe three. My mom worked until I was 13 or 14. We always had food on the table. One day, to beat the heat and the cold in Eastern Washington, dad just packed us up and came over here to Tacoma. He was a natu- ral-born heavy equipment operator and wound up working 25 years for McChord Field. I guess I am my father’s son, because that’s what got me goin’ on the waterfront—my ability to handle equip- ment. In my early days in Local 23 I became a real good crane driver.

I went into the Marine Corps in 1969. That’s how I got on the waterfront when I got back to Tacoma. James Cook, a guy in my Marine outfit, was a reservist from here who worked as a long- shoreman. He asked me what I did for a living. I told him I worked in the bar at the Winthrop Hotel. I’d worked my way up in another place from dish- washer to bar manager. Cook asked me what I made, and I told him. Then he asked me if I ever thought about being a longshoreman. “Come on down,” he urged, “And try it some time.” And I did.

That was 42 years ago. I started coming down to the waterfront when I had a chance—a day here, a day there. When I went home from my first day throwing these big flour sacks there was nothing left in my tank. My fingers were raw and every joint in my body ached. It was a horrible day, but I refused to quit.

At first, I hated the waterfront because it was dirty and the people were so rough in those days. But it was good money and I got lucky and made the bench, which meant you became a permit man. I got picked, I eventually learned, partly because of my work attitude and partly because they mistak- enly thought I was the grandson of a legendary longshoreman named Barney Ruckers.

Actually, the only thing that kept me on the waterfront is that I got pissed off. Once the guys I had a chance—you know, a day here, a day there. When I thought about being a longshoreman. “Come on down,” he urged, “And try it some time.” And I did.

Then I ran into a Black guy named Willie Lee. One day, he says, “I’m gun’ to show you how to be a longshoreman.” And he would yell and scream and harass me. I was with that man so much he made me a damn good longshoreman. It seemed like all the Black guys then were huge, 6’2”, 6’3”, 240, 250. Here I was 150 pounds. I couldn’t muscle it like the big guys. So Willie Lee taught me how to use every ounce of my body for leverage.

To use your body you had to use angles. One time we had this 450-pound bale of pulp wedged in tight on its edge. These big guys were down in the hold sweating with peaves trying to get it in place. Finally Harvey Matthews, the hatch tender, came down. He wasn’t a big guy. There were two bands holding that pulp that you could get your hands on—one in back, one in front. Matthew reached back with two hands, grabbed the bands, squatted down, humped the bale with his body, picked it up, and shoved it in place, using his legs and everything. That’s leverage. I never forget that lesson.

Back when I was still new you didn’t talk with your mouth because they’d send you down the road. I can recall how this White old-timer, Bud Mostrom, used to show me so much disrespect. One day he asked this other young man to work a pulp ship with him. We were the only two younger guys there. Mostrom looked me right in the eye and said, “I picked a young stud, because some of these kids can’t handle it.”

I was seething. I told my partner, Willie Lee, OK, you big mother—Willie weighed 275—today we’re goin’ and we ain’t stoppin’.” We humped and hollered all day long. That last hour we took 60 ton of pulp in 55 minutes. Then we had to go to chow and come back. I had thrown so hard my arms locked up. I said to Willie, “What am I gonna do? Listen to this S.O.B. talk some more!”

Well, I went back, and Mostrom approached me and said, “Hey, kid, you’re all right.” After that he always talked to me in a positive way. It wasn’t that he couldn’t stand me. I guess I just had to prove myself. That’s how most of those old-timers were. Years later, when women began to come on the waterfront, I thought “no” at first. Then, as the work became mechanical and gentrified, I said to myself, “Well, that’s what they once thought about you,” changed my mind and decided I’d never hard-time women on the waterfront. In fact, I’ve come to admire them.

I had my own little civil rights movement on the waterfront in the 1960s, teaching people to respect me. Every time I’d see the pictures of the dogs and the hoses attack- ing Blacks in the South I’d rent mad, and Lord help the first guy who crossed me the next day. The union itself wasn’t preju- diced, but we had our individual problems on the waterfront. In fact, I’ve come to admire them.

February 2004

Strads working shipside, North Intermodal Yard
For instance, just after Martin Luther King died we were working rubber when our gear broke down. Back then you waited for repairs. I heard these White kids down below from where I was. They were talking about shooting Black people. Fool names came up. I got mad and madder. Finally I exploded. I grabbed a bear claw, which was like an axe handle with a triangle end with nubs to pull the rubber. I jumped down 12 feet to where these guys were and landed on boards. It sounded like a gun shot.

I screamed, “Come on!” I tried to hold it all in, but I had enough. I got these four guys in one corner and I was going to kill somebody. All of a sudden I heard this soft, caressing voice. “Take it easy. Ike. It’s not worth it.” It was Dick Tulare. He was 6’4”, 280 pounds, a gentle giant. After much talking, he finally touched me and massaged my shoulders. I sighed, looked at those guys, looked at Dick, and said, “Thank you, brother.” He was a white guy. Tulare kissed me on the side of my head and said, “Let’s go.” He led me upstairs. There was no pressure, no yelling, like a gun shot.

The last train they loaded was 300 cans in 16 lifts in one shift. We’ve done over 1200 moves in a shift since then, but that 937 was made with just three tracks and six three-high machines that could go over railcars. Later we had eight tracks and more strads. Some of those 937 runs were over two miles long. When I look back on it now it still blows my mind.

After a while most guys called me “Pops.” They seemed to dub me a kind of a father figure. White guys, too—even more White than Black—would ask me to counsel them. I wanted to help, and I didn’t believe in polarization, which is horrible. I tried to get guys together. We formed a group called the African American Longshoremen’s Association (AALA) so guys could at least have somebody to talk to.

Our union back in those days lacked any line of communication, even for White guys. If you had a problem with a foreman or a guy, who did you talk to? I tried to get people together so they could talk and solve problems. In the 1980s some Black guys got transferred up here from Portland, which was racist. They had chips on their shoulders. I tried to settle them down and urge them not to make every situation a Black and White issue, because every situation is not that way. Eventually the AALA awarded me a plaque in appreciation of my work.

Looking back, this waterfront has been good to me. It’s given all my sons a job. And the waterfront is about the only place I know where a man, especially a Black man, can be as much of a man as he wants to be. That’s worth its weight in gold. Sure, there are racists on the waterfront, but the union is not racist. If it was, how come I was so successful? And how come my son Terry was elected Dispatcher, one of the most powerful jobs on the waterfront? How could Willie Adams get elected International Secretary-Treasurer? You get those votes because the union people respect you, not because you’re White or Black.

Today we have many new people on the waterfront who don’t know anything about unions. If you’re going to come into this industry, you have to be taught where you have been, where you are now and where you are going. You have to be taught the longshore way. We can only do this by education. I think the 2002 lockout was a wake-up call to us. Now everybody knows we’re back to what we control. We better be ready for 2008. Don’t sit there thinking you’re a fat cat. You’d better be ready for a fight.
DUTCH GOVERNMENT PLANS PORT Deregulation

The Netherlands declared it will no longer abide by an international labor standard protecting dockers’ work and jurisdiction. The announcement came after long-standing maritime employers, the docks’ union FNV Bondgenoten, the labor ministry, and the International Labor Organization to review the country’s implementation of those labor protections.

Labor minister Aart Jan de Geus claimed that the standard, ILO Convention 137, violated labor market deregulation policy. The convention was ratified by the Netherlands in 1919 and requires signatory countries to maintain a registry of dockworkers and give preference to registrants laid off because of technological advances when new jobs open up. Now the government desires an “open market” approach that would award dockers’ work to the lowest bidders.

Abandoning the convention will harm all dockers, FNV Bondgenoten Coordinator Niek Stam said. “If we lose it in The Netherlands, then the Belgians and Germans also lose,” Stam told The Dispatcher. “If they can chep under labor in Rotterdam, that will affect them because the ship owners will say their ports must lower prices or lose cargo to Rotterdam. If they can do it in the largest port in the world, they can do it anywhere.”

The idea of eliminating the convention was proposed by the League of Nations in 1919 and now under the UN, proposes labor standards. Even Saddam Hussein, who adopted Convention 137—the U.S. has not.

Convention 137 came out of dockers’ efforts in the 1920s to prevent the development of containerization in the 1960s. Workers fought for their jobs, and trade disruptions followed. The ILO sought to solve the problem by establishing international standards. Even though workers in the Rotterdam port employers had to either re-establish the old list or set up a new one. When the government did not need to. When the list required by Convention 137 and consequently guaranteed they would keep the port. Even Saddam Hussein, who adopted Convention 137—the U.S. has not.

“ITF Dockers’ Section Secretary Ken Macgregor said the country must eliminate the list required by Convention 137 and maintain that meant the government did not need to. When the employers would not reintegrate the list, the union asked the government to eliminate the list and set up a new one. When the government declined this request, the union took the government to court.”

The case is still pending.

ITF Dockers’ Section Secretary Ken Macgregor said the country must eliminate the list required by Convention 137 and maintained that meant the government did not need to. When the employers would not reintegrate the list, the union asked the government to eliminate the list and set up a new one. When the government declined this request, the union took the government to court. The case is still pending.

The case is still pending.

The union found out in 2000 that the Rotterdam employers had unilaterally abolished the registry list of dockers. The employers had previously guaranteed they would keep the list required by Convention 137 and maintained that meant the government did not need to. When the employers would not reintegrate the list, the union asked the government to eliminate the list and set up a new one. When the government declined this request, the union took the government to court.

The case is still pending.

On the job in Rotterdam. Three longshore workers are lowered by a crane to remove twistlocks on the containers. The seven-high stack is too tall to be worked with lash sticks, so the lashers go over the side. The person on the top is a radio operator who stays in touch with the crane operator for safety reasons.

The union found out in 2000 that the Rotterdam employers had unilaterally abolished the registry list of dockers. The employers had previously guaranteed they would keep the list required by Convention 137 and maintained that meant the government did not need to. When the employers would not reintegrate the list, the union asked the government to eliminate the list and set up a new one. When the government declined this request, the union took the government to court.

The case is still pending.

BANGLADESH DOCKERS RESIST SSA PORT PRIVATIZATION

The members of the Chittagong Port Workers’ Union knew they were in for a long fight when they heard in 1997 that Stevedoring Services of America had cut a deal with their government to build a huge private terminal at their port. The two parties signed the agreement in 1998, and since then dockers have fought it to a standstill with strikes, demonstrations and court battles. But if the project is built, it would undermine the union contracts with the public port and threaten the Bangladeshi dockers union’s very existence. Now the union is asking for international support, beginning with a workers’ conference in Chittagong March 18-19.

The Port of Chittagong sits on the banks of the Karnaphuli River, about nine nautical miles up from the Bay of Bengal in one of the poorest countries on earth. The half-billion dollar termi- nal SSA wants to build would make SSA the main player in that country’s trade. Its location would effectively block much of the public port’s traffic and its huge capacity would suck up most of its work. According to the union, this would have enormous social consequences.

“The main center of Bangladesh’s coastal activities will be with the outside world is supposed to become the private property of a U.S. multinational which will be free to hire, dismiss and impose its rules on Bangladeshi workers,” General Secretary Shariatullah said in an appeal for international support. “No job will be secure. Previous [union] contracts will no longer operate.”

With a public facility workers’ rights as citizens in a parliamentary national which will be free to hire, dismiss and impose its rules on workers, citizens will have little chance of affecting corporate deci- sions. Without a union, dockers would become casual employees.

Union members objected to SSA taking over most of the work in Bangladesh’s main port largely because of that company’s anti-union attitude. Longshore Local 10 Executive Board member Clarence Thomas attended the Dec. 6-7 All-Asia Workers’ Conference Against Privatization and Deregulation in India with the Chittagong dockers, and was on the agenda. “SSA was one of the most bel- ligerent of PMA member companies at the ILWU-PMA negotiations in 2002,” Thomas told the conference. “They’re outsourcing our jobs at the same time they’re privatizing Chittagong.”

The company has a cosy enough relationship with the Bush administra- tion to have won a no-bid contract to run the docks at Umm Qair in occup- ied Iraq. Its officials also met with the Oakland Police before the April 7 demonstration against war profiteering at which police opened fire with “less lethal” weapons on demonstra- tors and longshore workers. Chittagong’s workers began their fight in 1997, as soon as they heard of the pending agreement with SSA. By July 2001 they had shut the port down a total of 33 days with protests, according to The Cargo Letter, an industry journal. The government called off the plan after a three-day strike July 7, 2001, and it looked like the scheme might founder.

But the U.S. government intervened. U.S. Ambassador Mary Ann Peters blurted it out at a conference in September 2002 that U.S. investment would be imperiled if SSA didn’t get the terminal, according to the Bangladesh magazine Holiday. The 50,000 port workers continued demonstrations and hunger strikes. They formed a coalition with the port and Chittagong Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury, and took the government to court.

The coalition won a major round last May 19 when Bangladesh’s Supreme Court found that the gov- ernment’s deal with SSA was illegal. The court ruled the government had bypassed the jurisdiction of the Port Authority. The government granted the lease in “an arbitrary manner, without a complete procedure through public auction,” the ruling said.

But the decision also exposed how one-sided the deal was—in SSA’s favor.

“The agreement gave SSA a 188- year lease on the land,” National 2 Workers Federation President Tafazzul Hussain told Local 10’s “They have only 99 years. All rights would remain with SSA, all rules will be SSA’s rules. There will be no Bangladesh trained employees that port. Only a small royalty would be given to the country.”

SSA court the decision the Port of Chittagong secured loans and bought nine new yard cranes, accord- ing to a recent Corporate Accountability service report. Planned new construction will raise the annual capacity to 1.2 mil- lion TEU. This increased capacity will help ease port congestion and could make the SSA plan unneces- sary, though SSA is still trying to build their private port.

Meanwhile the dockers are glob- ally preparing for their fight to the Dec. 6-7 conference explained their struggle to the 85 dockers who gathered for a March 18-19 convention to find ways to save the port. Local 10’s Clarence Thomas will attend.

“We are calling the convention to save our ports, save Chittagong and save our country,” Hussain told the conference.

HEALTH CARE COSTS TAKE CENTER STAGE

The most tangible sign yet of the breakdown of the American health care system was when 3700 grocery workers in southern California struck and were locked out for a week and then fired for their beef. Not the industry’s notoriously low wages, but the life-and-death issue who will pay the tab for the health care?

Precarious though their economic well-being is, these dockers, stockers and other employees at Vons—a Safeway subsidiary—gave up their week’s checks in lieu of the company demand that they pay a substantially larger share of their health care. When they refused, they were fired. That reduced the weekly wage for Los Angeles super- market workers was $312. Safeway’s decision to fire the employees of Food and Commercial Workers, would have cost them as much as $95 a week in co-pays by the end of the contract.

As soon as the UFCW-represent- employees at Vons and Pavilions—
another Safeway subsidiary—walked off the job, Albertsons and Ralph's locked out their UFCW members, too. Subsequent talks pro-
duced an agreement that sends current employees' health package temporarily, but will eventually dismantle one of the best union health care plans in the country (see story page 7). Local grocery workers have to shift their costs to compete with Wal-Mart, a natio-
rious job master whose health plans are so expensive and tight that even the best employees can hardly afford. Wal-Mart, again, is the prototypical example, although it's longer afford. Diminished coverage is even more
magnified by the grocery worker strike. Workers with the lowest 50th in incomes spent approximately 17 per-
cent of their 2002 after-tax earnings on health care—or simply went without. If employers are no longer willing to keep up their end of the social con-
tact they accepted after World War II, the U.S. finally may have to adopt some kind of national health plan. Just such a step was urged in mid-
January by the National Academy of Sciences, which concluded that the U.S. spends $209 billion a year on useless health-care paperwork.

The result is that health care cost increases that regu-
larly outstrip overall economic growth will continue. The U.S. spends about 15 per-
cent of total gross domestic product on health care, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an amount equal to $5,440 per person in 2002.

The result is that health care costs is the sheer wastefulness of the current, jerry-rigged system. A Harvard Medical School study concluded that the U.S. spends $209 billion a year on useless health-care paperwork. The result is that health care cost increases that regu-
larly outstrip overall economic growth will continue. The U.S. spends about 15 per-
cent of total gross domestic product on health care, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an amount equal to $5,440 per person in 2002.

The result is that health care costs is the sheer wastefulness of the current, jerry-rigged system. A Harvard Medical School study concluded that the U.S. spends $209 billion a year on useless health-care paperwork. The result is that health care cost increases that regu-
larly outstrip overall economic growth will continue. The U.S. spends about 15 per-
cent of total gross domestic product on health care, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an amount equal to $5,440 per person in 2002.

The result is that health care costs is the sheer wastefulness of the current, jerry-rigged system. A Harvard Medical School study concluded that the U.S. spends $209 billion a year on useless health-care paperwork. The result is that health care cost increases that regu-
larly outstrip overall economic growth will continue. The U.S. spends about 15 per-
cent of total gross domestic product on health care, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an amount equal to $5,440 per person in 2002.

The result is that health care costs is the sheer wastefulness of the current, jerry-rigged system. A Harvard Medical School study concluded that the U.S. spends $209 billion a year on useless health-care paperwork. The result is that health care cost increases that regu-
larly outstrip overall economic growth will continue. The U.S. spends about 15 per-
cent of total gross domestic product on health care, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an amount equal to $5,440 per person in 2002.
Outlawing Vertical Tandem Lifts: A report on the new ILO port safety code

By Albert Le Monnier
ILWU Canada 2nd Vice President

A special meeting of experts on security, safety and health in ports was held Dec. 7-17, 2003 at the International Labour Organization office in Geneva, Switzerland with the mandate to achieve two main objectives:

2. Revise and modernize the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Dock Work, eliminating obsolete sections and introducing guidelines on new technologies in ports and on health issues not dealt with in the previous code.

This report concentrates on the Safety and Health Code, which covers all aspects of work in ports, including loading/unloading of goods or passengers onto or from ships, and specifically includes lifting appliances and loose gear, their safe use, operations on shore and operations aboard.

The Employer group at the meeting—the ILO is a tripartite organization composed of representatives from governments, employers and workers—made most of its input in the sections on safety and inspection standards. The Workers group provided input related to loose gear.

To fulfill our responsibilities in examining the “tools of our trade,” the rules state that “Round slings should not be used for cargo handling. The reason for this is, by design, a round sling (bundled endless twined yarn wrapped inside a braided cable) cannot be examined. Broken fibres inside the sling with the sleeve still intact would go undetected.

Furthermore, as another example, the guidelines acknowledge that “every item of loose gear should be inspected by a responsible person before use.” Even more to the point it states: “During a charge, cargo handling slings should be inspected prior to each lift as damage can occur while the ship is at sea as a result of movement of the package.”

The原文 draft text of the code advocated for Vertical Tandem Lift (VTL), the procedure of lifting as many as three containers vertically by one crane. The required inter-box connectors, called lift locks, are not even accessible for inspection. Broken slings disallow VTL for solid and liquid cargoes.

The Employer group never countered any of our arguments. They acknowledged any of our arguments. They could have brought up many more arguments, but we were constrained by time limits in presenting our case. The added stress factor for the crane operator has not been taken into account for example. What about his safety should a failure occur?

The Employer group never countered any of our arguments. They made it clear, however, that ratification of the document would be impossible with our amendment in place. As a compromise, it was agreed to have all references to VTLs removed from the text.

In place we developed an “innovative” clause directing that before any new technological or work practice is introduced in a workplace, it must be proven, based on facts, that it is safe, that full consultation with workers and their representatives is done and an agreement is reached with the participation of the competent authority of the state. Where the technology has global ramifications, a special small Tri-Partite meeting is to be held at the ILO office in Geneva before its introduction into the work place.

The ILO Code of Practice includes many other aspects of port operations. The document is indeed all-encompassing and well thought out. It was put together by two experts who have a combined global experience in port-related activity of some 90 years. I encourage all ILWU Safety Committees, both in the U.S. and Canada to adopt this code and make it the cornerstone of our safety program.

For a full transcript of the new code and a final report, I urge all interested readers to go to the ILO website:

ECONOMIC TERROR

The biggest single cause of fear in most people’s lives is economic. It’s well known that in the last four years, America has lost over three million jobs, most of them in manufacturing. We are facing the highest levels of unemployment and underemployment since the engineered recession of the early Reagan era—the last time this kind of terror was deliberately applied. To be fair, some of the jobs are simply disappearing because of competition from locally owned firms in low-wage zones such as Mexico, China and the Philippines. But many are being exported to these same low-wage zones by U.S.-based corporations.

Meanwhile, the Federal government continues to put new terror weapons in the hands of employers. The most obvious is to import engineers and other skilled technical workers from South Asia, or Bush’s proposal to import Guest Worker bill that would “legalize” undocumented workers on temporary visas as the virtual indentured servants of their employers, and so on.

And it’s not only that an ever-increasing proportion of America’s workers face job insecurity. The jobs they are likely to get when they are released by brutal employer pressure to cut costs are “good jobs” that pay living wages—high levels of unemployment because they enforce what economists call “social choice,” i.e., that is, they scare workers into tolerating the intolerable.

No decent health insurance—varies only on insurance for all—economic terrorism can live in dread or chronic illness.

Again, workers accept ever-increasing levels of unaf- fonds via tax cuts and the Bush strategy of starving the Federal government’s Social Security is still solvent, the Bush strategy of starving the Federal government of funds via tax cuts and overspending is designed to force its privatization. This would release a huge flow of capital into the coffers of investment banks and insurance companies, but leave most of us vul- nerable to market fluctuations in the assets we will depend on old age.

SOCIAL TERROR

Americans are also experiencing higher social and familial anxiety. Much of this anxiety can be traced to the defunding of public services over the last two decades. Most states now face severe deficits as a result of the Bush administration’s cuts in grants for health, welfare, education and transportation.

The results are everywhere visible. Decaying public schools with demoralized, underpaid teachers. Skyrocketing college tuition along- side flat financial aid. Mass transit that goes fewer places less often for higher fares. A public health system on the verge of collapse.

So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.

POLITICAL TERROR

Finally, Americans face direct as well as indirect political intimidation. For most of the two years after 9/11, it was difficult in many places to voice any serious criticism of the Bush administration for fear of being associated with the concerted govern- ment and media campaign against the Al Qaeda atrocities set out to exploit them for political pur- poses. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 authorizes a host of repressive meas- ures, including the virtual suspension of privacy rights, and allows the Attorney General to define “terror- ists” and “terrorist support” organiza- tions more or less at will.

As dissent beyond the timidity infec- tual is increasingly tarred with the “terrorist” brush, so protest is treated as terrorism. So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.

POLITICAL TERROR

Finally, Americans face direct as well as indirect political intimidation. For most of the two years after 9/11, it was difficult in many places to voice any serious criticism of the Bush administration for fear of being associated with the concerted govern- ment and media campaign against the Al Qaeda atrocities set out to exploit them for political pur- poses. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 authorizes a host of repressive meas- ures, including the virtual suspension of privacy rights, and allows the Attorney General to define “terror- ists” and “terrorist support” organiza- tions more or less at will.

As dissent beyond the timidity infec- tual is increasingly tarred with the “terrorist” brush, so protest is treated as terrorism. So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.

POLITICAL TERROR

Finally, Americans face direct as well as indirect political intimidation. For most of the two years after 9/11, it was difficult in many places to voice any serious criticism of the Bush administration for fear of being associated with the concerted govern- ment and media campaign against the Al Qaeda atrocities set out to exploit them for political pur- poses. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 authorizes a host of repressive meas- ures, including the virtual suspension of privacy rights, and allows the Attorney General to define “terror- ists” and “terrorist support” organiza- tions more or less at will.

As dissent beyond the timidity infec- tual is increasingly tarred with the “terrorist” brush, so protest is treated as terrorism. So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.

POLITICAL TERROR

Finally, Americans face direct as well as indirect political intimidation. For most of the two years after 9/11, it was difficult in many places to voice any serious criticism of the Bush administration for fear of being associated with the concerted govern- ment and media campaign against the Al Qaeda atrocities set out to exploit them for political pur- poses. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 authorizes a host of repressive meas- ures, including the virtual suspension of privacy rights, and allows the Attorney General to define “terror- ists” and “terrorist support” organiza- tions more or less at will.

As dissent beyond the timidity infec- tual is increasingly tarred with the “terrorist” brush, so protest is treated as terrorism. So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.

POLITICAL TERROR

Finally, Americans face direct as well as indirect political intimidation. For most of the two years after 9/11, it was difficult in many places to voice any serious criticism of the Bush administration for fear of being associated with the concerted govern- ment and media campaign against the Al Qaeda atrocities set out to exploit them for political pur- poses. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 authorizes a host of repressive meas- ures, including the virtual suspension of privacy rights, and allows the Attorney General to define “terror- ists” and “terrorist support” organiza- tions more or less at will.

As dissent beyond the timidity infec- tual is increasingly tarred with the “terrorist” brush, so protest is treated as terrorism. So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.

POLITICAL TERROR

Finally, Americans face direct as well as indirect political intimidation. For most of the two years after 9/11, it was difficult in many places to voice any serious criticism of the Bush administration for fear of being associated with the concerted govern- ment and media campaign against the Al Qaeda atrocities set out to exploit them for political pur- poses. The PATRIOT Act of 2001 authorizes a host of repressive meas- ures, including the virtual suspension of privacy rights, and allows the Attorney General to define “terror- ists” and “terrorist support” organiza- tions more or less at will.

As dissent beyond the timidity infec- tual is increasingly tarred with the “terrorist” brush, so protest is treated as terrorism. So working parents face a host of worries about their kids. How they’ll get to school on time. How good an education they’ll get there and how safe they’ll be. How they’ll pay for college. How to keep them from abus- ing alcohol and drugs, contracting an STD or HIV or getting pregnant and how to get them treatment or an abortion if they do. No wonder sui- cide is the second largest cause of death among teenagers after car acci- dents, no wonder divorce rates are up and no wonder the market for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs is booming.
A couple of letters in The Dispatcher of April 2004 provide some interesting comments. First though, I want to commend you for printing them. Seems to me the democratic thing to do.

The letters I’m referring to are from those writers who object to the liberal bastards. I won’t comment on their vitriol or the attacks on the hundreds of thousands of peaceful marchers. Someone who is a member of this union taking such an attitude shocked me. I find it hard to believe that realization that in this country everyone is entitled to his personal opinion, but for arguments that are based on the facts. I question whether supporters of belonging to the ILWU to object to a liberal policy is mind boggling.

Another organization, one of otherwise, that is progressive has to be liberal. Or else be content with the status quo. I am speaking to the longshoremen who want the only change to be backward.

One of these writers called you liberal bastards. That is much, much nicer than what I think he, and the other of the same stripe, should be called! Keep up the good work!

Jim Hammons
Local 12, retired

INDEBTED FOR SPOTLIGHT

In response to two letters to the editor of The Dispatcher, I thought it was about time a publication complaining of The Dispatcher’s “liberal slant,” Webster’s Dictionary defines “liberal” as one who is progressive in thinking or principles, open handed, generous, broad-minded, or tolerant as to religious or political ideas.

I, for one, am indebted to The Dispatcher for the ability of administration’s action after blatant attack on unions, the working class, civil rights, Conscience, Social Security, our judicial system, the environment, and the financial security of all workers.

The Dispatcher has filled a void in which the mainstream and rightwing are reeling and remain to cover.

Denise Schaffe
Local 4

LIBERAL IS NOT A 4-LETTER WORD

Regarding those letters in the last Dispatcher, I wonder if those two writers who sent in the letter object to the liberal union which helps and protects all its members individually; a union that is not restricted to the word and believed that most of his listeners didn’t know either. So every time he wanted to say “crap” he said “liberal,” meaning to, “Democrat.” Seeing that at one time Reagan was a Democrat before he saw the opportunities of being a dirty labor-hating GOP he found himself Governor of California and then President of the United States, the time pretending that he loved all Americans, which he didn’t. When he was in all the positions he used to say “crap” and was not doing the meaning of the word “liberal”?

If you remember correctly, you will find that it was the Republican administration that turned the word liberal into a four-letter word. Reagan never knew the meaning of the word and believed that most of his listeners didn’t know either. So every time he wanted to say “crap” he said “liberal,” meaning to, “Democrat.” Seeing that at one time Reagan was a Democrat before he saw the opportunities of being a dirty labor-hating GOP he found himself Governor of California and then President of the United States, the time pretending that he loved all Americans, which he didn’t. When he was in all the positions he used to say “crap” and was not doing the meaning of the word “liberal”?

My Perisho

GET A JOB AT WAL-MART

Hard to believe the two letters from “conservatives” in the January issue of The Dispatcher. First they find it right and disturbing that men who claim to be part of our wonderful union do not have any idea of what is going on.

For example, they say the kind of reactionary who for so many years tried to get rid of the union were bridges. The only explanation I can come up with is that they have gotten their hands on the board. They also voted to end block grants to states and now our schools get money. When it comes to tax breaks for the rich and famous, however, conservatives toss money around like gum. They ask for balance in reportage and still use just the cargo hook.

My Perisho

BRIDGES “On the Beam” columns. They’d find progressive, working class oriented articles.

As to the harangue against “liberal,” It appears too many workers are listening to the likes of Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Bill O’Reilly on hate radio. What I really fall to understand is why any worker listens to the manicured hands-workers. It might be wise for them to instead do their own independent and analytical research. They might ask themselves what liberal” support. Here are a few examples: A liberal Congress brought Medicare, the Civil Right’s Act, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Head Start, protection of Stanards Act, training programs, know “liberals” cause those—that were and are supported by the ILWU.

Conservatives, I might add, love to hate organized labor. They also voted to end block grants to states and now our schools get money. When it comes to tax breaks for the rich and famous, however, conservatives toss money around like gum. They ask for balance in reportage and still use just the cargo hook.

My Perisho

Richard Austin
Local 32, retired

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Do the hands of brothers Seymour and Morse shackle when they pick up their pay or pension cheque? They ask for balance in reportage on our world’s biggest newspaper vis-à-vis “liberal versus conservative” outlook.

Which are correct when they say there are two sides, however, the opposing sides are corporate and workers. It might be wise for them to instead do their own independent research. They might ask themselves what liberal” support. Here are a few examples: A liberal Congress brought Medicare, the Civil Right’s Act, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Head Start, protection of Stanards Act, training programs, know “liberals” cause those—that were and are supported by the ILWU.

Conservatives, I might add, love to hate organized labor. They also voted to end block grants to states and now our schools get money. When it comes to tax breaks for the rich and famous, however, conservatives toss money around like gum. They ask for balance in reportage and still use just the cargo hook.

My Perisho

Dave Arland
Local 500, retired

MAY IS MEDICAL, DENTAL CHOICE MONTH

Active and retired longshoremen 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 longshoremen 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 gives new registrants in the ports where PMA manages the plans the right to choose their own 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 requirement have a choice of medical and dental plans during the Open Enrollment period and one additional time during the Plan Year.

MAY 31 for the change to be effective July 1.

ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan description booklet is under preparation and will be furnished soon.

Richard Austin
Local 32, retired

April 2-4, 2004

The conference will bring together labor video, computer and media professionals from all around the country and around the world. It will create a critical arena for the development of labor’s media in the battlefront to make our voices heard. We will explore some articles in The Dispatcher. The delegates supported our men and women in uniform. They called on the U.S. to bring them home—alive.

At the LaborTech conference, we will provide classes on how to use the new technology to combat workers’ hard-won rights and benefits. We believe that new media are to be congratulated for taking up the hard-won rights required to face up to the class oriented articles. And if there is a middle class, of whom do they speak? Do they rub elbows with the CEOs in the beer parlours?

I’m sure George W. Bush wasn’t very concerned about balance when he held his own “conservative” program of gutting workers’ hard-won rights and benefits. Those resolutions are reflected in their class oriented articles.

Dave Arland
Local 500, retired
Father and son pensioners

Hardly anyone working the waterfront in the ports of L.A. and Long Beach doesn’t know at least one member of the Lomelis. But when Mike Lomeli retired, both he and his son David were phased out of favor of hammer heads and he was assigned to them.

“Back then there were no elevators,” David said. “You climbed the crane.”

In 1988 David became a crane instructor and did that for eight years before going back to driving cranes.

Mike went through the union’s alcohol recovery program—he has been clean for 20 years—and went on to be a counselor for it.

“The union’s recovery program is the best thing the ILWU ever did,” he said. “I can’t say enough about it.”

Both men were active in the Local’s affairs. Within two or three years of joining Mike ran for and served on the local executive board and membership committee. After his recovery David also joined the local’s executive board and its membership and grievance committee. He continues to run the cartops for Local 94 and as a union pensioner and father and son have been active in the pensioner club.

Both men have some advice for the young folks coming up in the union.

“Take care of your union,” Mike said.

“Go to the meetings and do some things for the union rather than just take from it,” David said. “Get involved.”

Mike and David Lomeli play cards at the Harry Bridges Institute office.
A Helping Hand... when you need it most. That’s what we’re all about. We are the representatives of the ILWU-sponsored recovery programs. We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcoholism, drug abuse and other problems—and we’re just a phone call away.

### 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 dozens of rare photos of the union in action. **$7.00**
- **The Big Strike**: By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. **$6.50**
- **Workers on the Waterfront**: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s By Bruce Nelson: the most complete history of the origins, meaning, and impact of the 1934 strike. **$13.00**
- **The Union Makes Us Strong**: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. **$15.00** (paperback)
- **A Terrible Anger**: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco By David Selvin: the newest and best single narrative history about the San Francisco events of 1934. **$16.50**
- **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**

#### VIDEOS:
- **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. **$5.00**
- **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**

#### ORDER BY MAIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ILWU Story</strong></td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Big Strike</strong></td>
<td>$6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workers on the Waterfront</strong></td>
<td>$13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Union Makes Us Strong</strong></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Terrible Anger</strong></td>
<td>$16.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We Are the ILWU</strong></td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life on the Beam</strong></td>
<td>$28.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Enclosed $_____

**No sales outside the U.S.**

Name__________________________
Street Address or PO Box_________
City___________________________State_______ Zip_________

Make check or money order (U.S. Funds) payable to “ILWU” and send to ILWU Library, 1188 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

Prices include shipping and handling. Please allow at least four weeks for delivery. Shipment to U.S. addresses only.

---

Bound Dispatchers for sale
2003 Edition Now Available!

Beautiful, hardcover collections of The Dispatcher for 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 are now available. These are a must for Locals and individuals keeping a record of the union’s activities. Get your copies of the ILWU’s award-winning newspaper while the limited supply lasts. Send a check for $50.00 for each volume (year) to The Dispatcher at:

Bound Dispatchers
c/o The Dispatcher
1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94109

---

A Helping Hand... ...when you need it most. That’s what we’re all about. We are the representatives of the ILWU-sponsored recovery programs. We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcoholism, drug abuse and other problems—and we’re just a phone call away.

### ILWU LONGSHORE DIVISION

- **ADRP—Southern California**
  - Jackie Cummings
  - 870 West Ninth St. #201
  - San Pedro, CA 90731
  - (310) 547-9966

- **ADRP—Oregon**
  - Jim Copp
  - 3054 N.E. Glisan, Ste. 2
  - Portland, OR 97232
  - (503) 231-4882

- **ADRP—Washington**
  - Richard Borsheim
  - 400 North Point
  - Seattle, WA 98133
  - (206) 621-1038

### ILWU WAREHOUSE DIVISION

- **DARE—Northern California**
  - Gary Atkinson
  - 22693 Hesperian Blvd., Ste. 277
  - Hayward, CA 94541
  - (800) 772-8288

- **EAP—British Columbia**
  - Ted Grewcutt
  - 745 Clark Drive, Suite 205
  - Vancouver, BC V5L 3J3
  - (604) 254-7911

---

**ILWU CANADA**

- **ADRP—British Columbia**
  - Ted Grewcutt
  - 745 Clark Drive, Suite 205
  - Vancouver, BC V5L 3J3
  - (604) 254-7911

---

**ILWU Book & Video Sale**

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

- **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 dozens of rare photos of the union in action. **$7.00**
- **The Big Strike**: By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. **$6.50**
- **Workers on the Waterfront**: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s By Bruce Nelson: the most complete history of the origins, meaning, and impact of the 1934 strike. **$13.00**
- **The Union Makes Us Strong**: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. **$15.00** (paperback)
- **A Terrible Anger**: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco By David Selvin: the newest and best single narrative history about the San Francisco events of 1934. **$16.50**
- **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**

- **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. **$5.00**
- **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**