



The DISPATCHER

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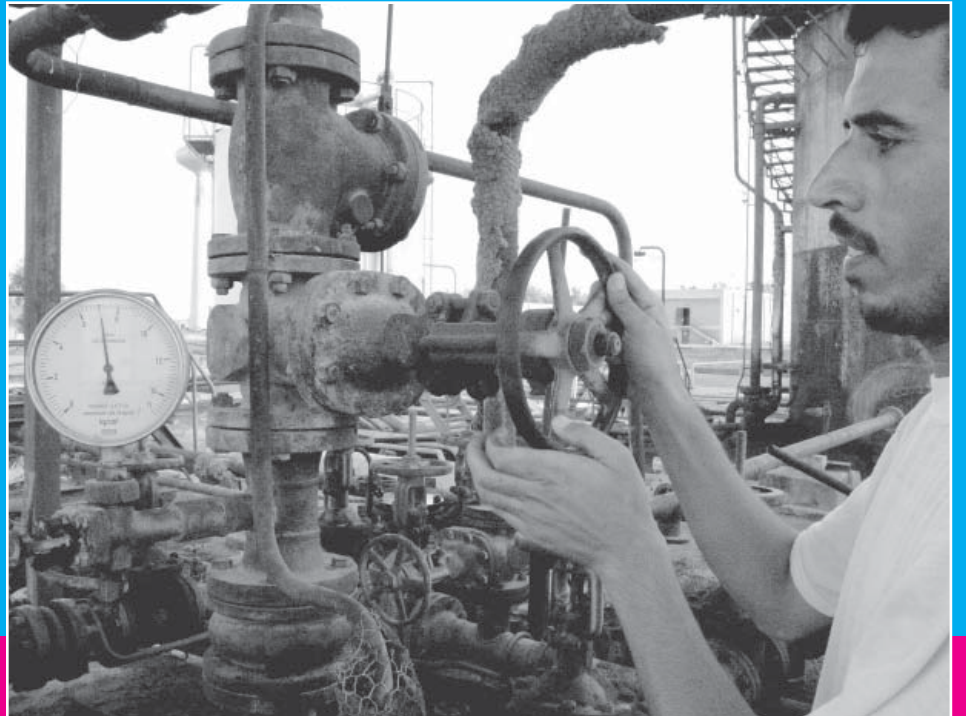


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Inside Line

BETWEEN IRAQ AND A HARD PLACE

The Iraqi war is getting bloodier and bloodier with no end in sight. Polls show the majority of Americans now feel the deaths and other costs just aren't worth it anymore and that they were lied to about why U.S. troops invaded. Polls show a majority of Iraqis want the U.S. out.

In that atmosphere six Iraqi union officials toured the U.S. in June. As Marcy Rein reports on page 5 they met with thousands of U.S. union workers and told their tales of both being exploited by and resisting the occupation and being targeted by terrorists as collaborators.

The ILWU hosted the West Coast Iraqi union visitors in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Portland and Seattle, getting out the story the corporate media won't touch—how the continuing war and occupation is ruining the lives of regular working people in Iraq—the death, destruction and depravation.

But such desperation breeds resistance, as journalist David Bacon reports on pages 6-7. Bacon, who just returned from his second trip to occupied Iraq, tells the union oil workers' story of struggle to keep their jobs and living standards and stop the U.S. from privatizing the oil. Next month we will run Bacon's story on Iraqi longshore workers doing the same.

—Steve Stallone
Editor

AWARDS

The Dispatcher won a batch of awards for its 2004 coverage. In the journalism contest of the Western Labor Communications Association, the organization of union publication editors and communications staffers west of the Rockies, Steve Stallone won first place Best Column for "Post Election Post" (November); Maria Brooks won first place for Best Feature for "The Daughters of Tugboat Annie" (March) and Harvey Schwartz, the official curator of the ILWU Oral History program won first place for Best Series for three of his oral history pieces (Keith Eickman in March, Jack Olsen in April and Don Watson in May). Schwartz also won the WLCA's special "Floyd Tucker Award" for his oral history of Local 23's Ike Morrow (February).

The Dispatcher won second place for best overall newspaper and Steve Stallone won second place for Best In-depth Analysis for the story of the settlement of the Southern California grocery workers strike/lockout (February) and David Bacon won second place for Best News Story for his piece about the assassination of Teamster organizer Gilberto Soto in El Salvador (November) and Tom Price won an honorable mention for Best Feature for his story on a port trucker (June).

In the journalism contest of the International Labor Communications Association, the organization of union publication editors and communications staffers for the AFL-CIO CLC and the CLC, *The Dispatcher* won first place Best Newspaper. Steve Stallone won first place in the special Saul Miller Collective Bargaining story for his piece on the settlement of the Southern California grocery workers strike/lockout (February) and Marcy Rein won first place for the Saul Miller Organizing story for her article on Hawaii Local 142's organizing training (June). Artist Jim Swanson won second place Best Original Cartoon for his drawing of giving George W. Bush the boot (September), Maria Brooks won third place Best Feature for her story "Daughters of Tugboat Annie" (March) and Harvey Schwartz won third place Best Labor History story for his oral history of Ike Morrow (February).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Protecting our pensions

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

Recently the news has been filled with stories about union-negotiated pensions going bust. People have labored for a company for their whole working career believing their loyalty and commitment would be rewarded with a comfortable retirement and spousal support. And then the company pulls some legal scam in bankruptcy court and all those dreams are shattered. It's incomprehensible and reprehensible.

In this atmosphere I wasn't surprised that several ILWU members recently approached me asking about the security of our pensions. I was glad they were concerned and I figured they weren't the only ones wanting an update. I want to give you assurances, but I also want to issue warnings, tell you what your union is doing to protect your pension and alert you to what you can do.

The ILWU negotiates many contracts throughout the industries we represent with various pension plans and different degrees of risk. The main kind of pension facing problems in corporate bankruptcies and contract negotiations these days are "defined benefit pensions." In this kind of pension—like the ILWU longshore pension plan and the Northern California Master Freight contract that covers some

ILWU Local 6 and 17 warehouse workers—the union and the employer negotiate a specific amount of money a retiree gets each month, usually based on the number of years the worker has been employed by the company. The employer is required by law to set aside a certain amount of money each year, based on what the eventual benefit will be, and put it into an investment fund so it will be there when needed. The employer is also legally required to contribute a certain

amount of money each year to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), the government agency charged with insuring workers' pensions, as an insurance policy payment in case problems arise in the future with the company's financing.

There are two kinds of defined benefit pensions—multi-employer plans, where, like in our longshore plan and the Northern California Master Freight contract, different companies band together and create one plan for all their workers, and single employer plans, where one company assumes all the payments and risks.

I want to assure all ILWU members covered by the longshore plan that their pension is very solid. This is true for several reasons. First, as a multi-employer plan, should any of the almost 80 companies in the Pacific Maritime Association employer group go bankrupt, the remaining ones are bound by the contract to cover the financial obligations. And as long as world trade continues, our industry and employers will likely remain profitable. The ILWU Coast Committee also acts as equal trustees with the PMA, always keeping a close watch on the fund and its investments.

Also, in 2002 the longshore negotiators agreed to a funding schedule that was approved by the PBGC—which, as the plan's insurer, has an interest in making sure is solvent.

Other non-longshore ILWU members who have single employer pension plans could face more risks. If their employer should go broke, either through changes in their industry or even simple bad

management, they could face employer attempts to bail out of their pension payment obligations. And if they then need to turn to the PBGC for help and insuring their monthly retirement checks, they may find trouble. The PBGC's single employer insurance fund is itself in debt, having recently been stuck picking up the bill on numerous large pension debts left behind by bankrupt steel and airline companies, among others. In many cases the PBGC insurance limits have resulted in workers receiving only a portion of what they have been promised.

Currently, Republicans have legislation in Congress which, in typical Orwellian fashion they call the "Pension Protection Act of 2005," but actually could put pensions further at risk. Provisions in the multi-employer section of the legislation could affect the carefully negotiated and PBGC-approved longshore funding requirement and affect future bargaining.

The section affecting single employer plans has many defects. It has a provision that would prohibit paying any future plant closing benefits, including those already negotiated, no matter how well funded the pension plan is. It would also prohibit benefit improvements, even simple updates just to keep up with wage growth, if the plan's funding falls below 80 percent. If the funding falls below 60 percent all benefit accruals cease and cannot be restarted until

the funding level is back up to 80 percent. These provisions put workers at risk of having their employer manipulate the plan and intentionally trigger a benefit accrual freeze or a ban on benefit increases by simply failing to fund it adequately. These and many other provisions in the bill make workers' retirement less secure.

All 27 Republican members of the House of Representatives Education and Workforce Committee voted for the bill, while all 22 Democrats voted "present" (abstention) in protest of the lack of

information on how it would affect employer contributions to pension plans and how it would deal with the PBGC's shortfall. Now the Republican plan is to send it to the House Ways and Means Committee to fold it into one bill with Bush's Social Security privatization proposal and try to sell it as comprehensive retirement reform. They figure they may be able to "peel off" some Democrats reluctant to vote down the pension protection and get them to pass some form of Social Security privatization. It's a cynical and despicable move, but probably the only chance the Republicans have to pass a program nearly 70 percent of the American people oppose—even after months of it being the top sales pitch of Bush's domestic agenda.

As these legal maneuvers show, nothing is inviolable—not the best written contract language or the most righteous laws. We must always remain alert and vigilant. Right now we need all our members to write their Congressional representatives opposing both the Pension Protection Act and the Republican attempt to link Social Security privatization to it.

In closing, let me reiterate that the ILWU Longshore pension is secure and stable. The fact that we have so many large, multi-national companies contributing to the fund as employers and covering each other, and that your officers as Trustees of the fund review it in depth monthly, makes it probably the most secure pension in the country.

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Longshore gets Alaska cruise work back

By Todd Iverson

A 67-member delegation of ILWU members descended on Whittier, Alaska June 8 to press Carnival Cruise Lines to go back to using local longshore labor in the loading and unloading of passenger baggage in the cruise ships that dock there.

The entire delegation, along with several of ILWU Alaska longshore members, met at 10 a.m. in Anchorage at the Inlet Tower Hotel the day before to learn about the issues and discuss the game plan. A half-dozen members volunteered to help assist the local longshore force in the unloading of the vessel *Spirit* with the shift beginning at 1:30 a.m. Enthusiasm was high to take these living-wage, American-based jobs back from the foreign crew members. ILWU workers make \$29 an hour to secure vessels on the docks, handle baggage and load cargo on cruise ships in Whittier. The cruise lines' predominantly foreign crew typically makes \$1 to \$1.50 an hour.

Later that afternoon, the delegation boarded a chartered bus for the one-hour ride south. Whittier is a quiet little town, tucked inside of a fjord that leads to Prince William Sound.

Whittier longshore workers originally were contracted to take passenger baggage from bus or train to the ship where fellow longshore workers accepted the cargo inside the ship's hold. But midway through the 2004 season, Carnival refused to allow ILWU personnel onto the ship, denying ILWU Alaska members their traditional jobs. For a year the ILWU tried diplomatic means with Carnival to regain the work, but the Miami-based carrier refused. The Alaskan longshore workers were elated to receive support from the delegation, all of whom understood that had Carnival succeeded in Whittier, it would likely try this in other ports, as would other carriers.

"We had fought unsuccessfully with no progress," ILWU Alaska President Carl Norman said. "It is great to be part of an organization that takes care of each other," he added about the support that flew up from California, Oregon, Washington and Canada.



Longshore workers picket the Carnival Spirit as passengers arrive by bus.

While the weather had been pleasant in Anchorage, Whittier offered another scenario. Snow capped mountains that hugged the bay were socked out of view by low-lying clouds. A constant cold wind and persistent rain showers greeted the delegation when the protest began at 1:30 a.m. Carnival personnel were overwhelmed by the strong showing of support, but still would not allow longshore workers aboard the vessel. Management let them load bags from the dock to the bus, but didn't allow them on board ship to unload the luggage to the dock. When the gang then refused to touch the baggage on the dock, wanting all the work, not just some of it, Southeast Stevedoring locked out the ILWU. For the next five hours, superintendents from Southeast Stevedoring and crew members of the *Spirit* worked the forklifts and handled the bags.

Meanwhile dozens of ILWU members, despite a ceaseless biting wind, protested in the parking lot with signs stating foreign workers were taking American jobs. For a few hours the mood became disheartening as the delegation helplessly watched superintendents and crew members performing ILWU work. Legs became tired and bones increasingly cold. At 6 a.m., a representative from Carnival asked the local police to remove the longshore protestors from the premises, and the delegation was forced to continue their action from the sidewalk.

At 11 a.m. the entire group met in the hotel to plan a new strategy for

the upcoming day shift to reload the vessel when a new group of tourists arrived. Beginning at 1 p.m. buses and trains of Carnival customers began arriving to be dropped off for their cruise. Two dozen volunteers signed up to form a primary crew and backup crew in case the first gang was fired or replaced. But as the first gang arrived at the dock, the superintendent from Southeast Stevedoring informed them that they would be paid, but not allowed to do the work. At this point something needed to break the stalemate.

A half dozen Alaskan State Troopers had arrived by noon to back up Carnival's armed security guards. Signs and flyers were remade stating that the ILWU was locked out and American jobs were being done by foreign workers. While the weather had failed to be postcard worthy up to this point, mother nature unleashed its full fury with a hard, steady rain blown sideways from the Arctic-inspired winds. When the buses full of Carnival passengers began to arrive, the ILWU members decided it was time to make their stand.

"Nothing was happening and we felt we weren't getting anywhere," said Stephen Hanson of Local 8.

Most of the delegation stood at the driveway in front of the large chartered bus, impeding its progress. The bus driver inched ahead but the members would not flinch or back down. After five minutes of posturing by both sides, the police intervened and began arresting individuals for

disorderly conduct and obstruction of a roadway, including Michael Kennedy and Don Faker of Local 23, Stephen Hanson of Local 8, Gilbert Nelson of the Alaska longshore division and Booker T. Stevens from Local 19.

"The best part of being arrested was I got to sit in a warm police car and watch the others get drenched," Hanson said.

The next arriving buses were stopped on the street, where the passengers had to walk a hundred yards through the elements and dozens of ILWU protestors handing out flyers explaining the situation.

"We were there trying to make a point, and when the passengers got off the bus, we had to show that protecting our jobs was worth being arrested," Local 23 member Don Faker said after being released from jail.

The arrested members were taken to Anchorage, booked and cited and released later that night on \$500 bail each. The day's protest was the lead on the evening news in Anchorage and covered by the daily paper.

The following week, Carnival and Southeast Stevedoring agreed to return the disputed jobs to the ILWU, saving American jobs and retaining the work for the ILWU.

"There was a lot of back and forth, some posturing," said ILWU Alaska President Carl Norman. "We finally convinced them that it was in their best interest to return that work to U.S. citizens. Without the support from the rest of the coast, it would not have happened."

ULPs fuel five-day strike by SoCal IBU

By Marcy Rein

The IBU members who protect the Southern California coast walked off the job in a five-day unfair labor practice (ULP) strike June 23-27 against Marine Spill Response Corp. (MSRC). They say MSRC's labor law violations not only deny them their rights as workers but threaten the coast as well.

"We're saying the company broke the law by not recognizing and bargaining with our union, and we need our union contract so we can provide more reliable service," IBU member Tim Parker said. Parker and his co-workers work as oil spill responders, containing and cleaning up marine oil spills.

The strikers picketed in front of MSRC's office across from the CUT terminal in the Port of Long Beach, at the Carson office and at the BP terminal and dock where the company keeps its boats. Only three of the 18 responders working in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach crossed the line. Longshore workers honked all day as they passed the port locations, and some stopped by to walk the line.

"It felt good to let the company know how we felt," responder Chris Sogliuzzo said. "It showed we could stand up for something we believe in."

Until July 1, 2004, the responders

had worked under an IBU contract with Clean Coastal Waters (CCW), the company that since 1972 had handled oil spill response along the coast and 200 miles out to sea from just north of Malibu to the Mexican border. Then MSRC took over CCW. It hired all but one of the CCW workers and continued offering the same service using much of the same equipment. In doing so, it met several of the key criteria the NLRB uses to determine that a company is a legal "successor." Labor law requires successors to recognize and bargain with the unions in place at the companies they take over.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a complaint against MSRC June 22 for its failure to recognize and bargain with the union. A hearing on the complaint before an NLRB administrative law judge has been set for Sept. 13.

"After hearing all the evidence, the judge will then issue a ruling, which may be further appealed by all sides," MSRC CEO Steve Benz told workers in a company-wide e-mail.

While CCW focused on local oil spill response, MSRC handles a whole range of hazardous substance spills and natural disasters all over the world. It claims it doesn't have to recognize the IBU because its 18 Los Angeles/Long Beach responders

form part of a 235-person workforce and can be dispatched or "cascaded" wherever they're needed.

Ever since MSRC took over CCW, the workers have said this attitude and the company's safety practices put the coast at risk.

MSRC's three people in San Diego and 18 in LA/Long Beach now cover an area stretching all the way up to Big Sur—more than double that covered by CCW.

The responders say proper staffing for the LA/Long Beach Harbor area is three teams of six people. In October 2004, MSRC cascaded five responders from Southern California to Louisiana. With these five gone, others sick and on vacation, and the crew two people short to start with, Southern California only had five responders left to crew three boats more than 100 feet long and six smaller boats 18 to 44 feet long.

MSRC says it could bring in contractors if needed, but contractors lack familiarity with MSRC's equipment and, in some cases, with the tides, currents and geography of the harbor.

"Bringing in a contractor to do our job would be like bringing a guy off the street into a mechanic shop and telling him how to fix something step by step," said Sogliuzzo, who has worked for one of the contract-

ing companies. "Contractors are just good for bodies. "The actual deployment of our gear is less than 50 percent of what we do. We do corrective maintenance, preventive maintenance, training—it takes all kinds of training to run our equipment."

MSRC has done far less safety and equipment training than CCW did.

"When I started at CCW we used to take the boats out and deploy the gear regularly to keep our skill level up," responder Garrick Gilham said. "There are so many types of gear that if you don't practice, you forget the steps. MSRC doesn't have us do that."

Over the last year MSRC has swallowed up local spill response cooperatives all along the West Coast, and it is on course to secure a monopoly in the industry. This makes its business practices a concern to people far from Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor, IBU National President Dave Freiboth said.

"We have an opportunity to raise these issues coastwide," Freiboth said. "This is more than a classic labor-management relationship. It's about stewardship of the environment. An organized workforce gives our members protection to speak up when they see problems. We're part of the effort to maintain environmental standards."

Dismantling retirement benefits: The latest scam

U.S. corporations today are intent on radically restructuring the whole retirement system in America. The twin pillars of that system—defined benefit pensions and Social Security—are now under simultaneous attack.

Unlike in the past when corporate strategies targeted defined benefit pension plans and Social Security as two distinct and separate retirement systems, it now appears a single unified approach to rolling back workers' retirement benefits is emerging. The assault on defined benefit pension plans and Social Security are about to be linked, integrated and rolled into one coordinated corporate lobbying and legislative effort.

Despite Bush's barnstorming the country in recent months to promote his proposals to reform Social Security by privatizing it with "Private Investment Accounts," public opinion polls show Americans are not buying Bush's phony claim that adding such accounts to Social Security will not

make the crisis worse.

Bush's plans for Social Security reform are in trouble. And the big banks and financial institutions destined to reap billions of dollars from the Bush plan are worried. So Bush, Republicans in Congress and corporate interests are scheming to save the Social Security privatization plan by linking it to the crisis in defined benefit pension plans.

In late June, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives moved a pension bill, the Pension Protection Act, out of the Education and Workforce Committee. But instead of sending the bill to the floor of the House, it is being sent to the House Ways and Means Committee, where its chairman, William Thomas (R-CA) plans to integrate it with his committee's proposal for Social Security privatization. The two bills will be presented as one proposal for comprehensive restructuring of retirement programs in general. By integrating the two approaches, corporate interests can more effectively

concentrate their lobbying efforts to further privatize both systems and to transform both even faster into privatized, personal, 401(k)-like investment accounts.

Moreover, integrating both pension and Social Security reform provides Bush and corporate interests a further tactical advantage. It will make it difficult for Democrats to continue their current strategy of refusing to discuss Private Investment Accounts for Social Security if saving defined benefit pension plans is also on the discussion table. Democrats may be forced to consider, and perhaps even vote for, elements of Bush's Social Security plan in order to have a voice in saving defined benefit pension plans.

As the *Wall St. Journal* recently noted: "The pension bill has such broad support that without it, the Ways and Means panel's Social Security proposals would have little chance of being passed by the full House, business lobbyists say."

Corporate America wants a fully privatize retirement system. It wants Bush's private investment accounts for Social Security, which will allow banks and financial institutions to get their hands on workers' payroll taxes. And it wants to convert defined benefit pension plans into hybrid "Cash Balance" 401(k)-like pension plans, which allow companies to get out from under the liability of having to guarantee levels of benefit payments for their workers. Linking and integrating the restructuring of defined benefit pensions and Social Security together may well prove a faster way to get both.

—Jack Rasmus

National Writers Union, UAW 1981, AFLCIO

Rasmus is the author of the recently published book, "The War at Home: The Corporate Offensive from Reagan to Bush." It may be ordered by check for \$23.45 to "Kyklos Productions." Mail to Kyklos Productions, 211 Duxbury Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583.

Hope for recovery along the waterfront

by Bill Orton

There's a lot to be said about a career in longshore—the good money, good friendships and a real sense of family on the waterfront. It can all add up to good times for a longshore worker. But what if the "good times" become a little *too* good?

Like any workplace, drug and alcohol addiction can be found among those who work on the waterfront. Just ask Ron Armesto, a Local 13 member, who volunteers with 19 other ILWU members in Southern California to tell longshore workers that the help to get sober is only a phone call away.

"We are now an active face on the waterfront," said Armesto, whose 22 years clean makes him a sobriety veteran. "Drinking and drug use are endemic through our industry and covering up for them is old as time."

Mike Dimon, another volunteer, added, "I don't know how anyone stays clean, but hopefully I can steer them towards help."

For Dimon, Armesto and the other volunteer coordinators, steering an addict towards help means sending people to Jackie Cummings. Cummings, herself a recovering addict with 28 years of sobriety, is the Coast Director and Southern California representative for the ILWU/PMA Alcoholism/Drug Recovery Program, an employee benefit that pays all or most of the cost of drug or alcohol treatment for ILWU longshore workers and their families. Written into the ILWU-PMA coastwise contract in 1980, the benefit is jointly offered by the union and the employer. It is separate from the union's medical coverage plan.

"Business is never down," said Cummings, in part due to expansions in the program over the past 25 years. The benefit now covers family members and can also help get a longshore worker's job back if they were let go due to addiction.

"It is a very generous and realistic benefit," Cummings said, pointing out that similar programs elsewhere will often end payments after a first intervention. Under the program, fully 100 percent of the cost of treatment is covered for the first intervention, 90 percent for the second and 75 percent for the third.

"I tell people, 'They pay you to get clean. And they say 'Oh, really?' That works,'" said Berto Masing, one of Cummings' volunteers.

Although funded and offered by the PMA as a joint benefit, the employer is not involved in the treatment.

"PMA has no access to my files

and they never will," said Cummings, who relies on her ILWU volunteers to be the "face of the program" on the waterfront.

Cummings brings her coordinators together each year for a week-long training, where they can ask questions about the program, hear from experts on recovery issues and deepen their commitment to helping fellow longshore workers get clean.

"The coordinators are longshore brothers and sisters in recovery who are there to reach others on the job," said Cummings. "You'd be surprised how many people come in and say, 'I talked to so and so...'"

"If you wanna have what we have, then do what we do," said Red Brady, one of the volunteers. "Recovery is the only fair thing in life. Anyone can do it if they want to do it."

Under the benefit an ILWU member must be the one who asks for help, so a volunteer coordinator is often the first person to talk about sober living—and the employee benefit program—to someone ready to break their addiction.

"This program saved my life," said Richard Pacheco, another volunteer. "I didn't think I could stay clean down on the waterfront. I started in 1982, but didn't stay clean until 1986."

"My recovery is my main thing," said Pancho Morales, now retired. "I've seen miracles happen."

Morales tells of a fellow longshore worker who lost his job due to problems caused by drug addiction.

"This one guy got on the program and it turned him around 180 degrees," Morales said. "I seen a miracle happen deep down and I didn't think it would happen, but it's a good feeling when you see a guy make it. He got his Book back. His mother loves me. And he's happy."

While the volunteers differ in how they reach out to others, each shares a personal bond that comes from climbing out of a deep, dark hole.

"The three words that describe the disease for me were pitiful, incomprehensible and demoralization," said Marco Geich. "I ended up begging money on skid row."

Climbing out of the hole, all agreed, includes standing up and tell-



Left to right: Local 94 President Stuart Anderson, Local 63's Fred Marcus and Local 63's Fredia McGrew at Raffaello Ristorante having salad and calamari with fellow coordinators of the recovery program. Coordinators and recovering members and their families meet for dinner there the third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

ing others about addiction.

"What is our purpose being a coordinator? Even breaking our anonymity?" asked Geich. "It is to carry that message."

A message of hope, they all agree.

"I'm grateful to the ILWU because I was an addict for a long time, and when I got a job on the waterfront, I worked really hard to lose this job," said Fredia McGrew, about her addiction. "Now, I have a life beyond my wildest dreams. The changes in my life are awesome."

"I have a great life," Lisa Merrifield added. "I couldn't ask for a better life and I owe it to the ILWU. Every job I go on, I never have a problem telling people I am in recovery. I never forget I am inches away from death. The disease of addiction is wild out there. I love helping people in recovery."

For information about the ILWU-PMA addiction treatment benefit, contact the ADRP representative in your area listed on page 12.

The ILWU Warehouse Division and ILWU Canada also have pro-

grams with contacts on page 12.

Any ILWU longshore member or their family can access the recovery benefit by contacting Jackie Cummings directly at (310) 547-9966, by visiting her San Pedro office, at 870 West 9th Street, or by sending email to <jcummingsilwu@aol.com>.

Many choose to first ask questions to the volunteer coordinators. The volunteers are: Local 13, Ron Armesto, Red Brady, Tracy Cadwell, Vivian Delgado, Mike Dimon, Berto Masing, Lisa Merrifield, Pacho Morales (ret.), Michelle Ponce, Ray Ponce; Local 29, Willie Esquivel; Local 46, Victor Gallardo, Charlie Reeves; Local 63, Fred Marcus, Fredia McGrew, Danny Montiel, Hope Nuno, Richard Pacheco; Local 94, Stuart Anderson, Marco Geich.

For Southern California longshore workers, family and friends who like a sprinkling of recovery served with a full platter of fried calamari, the monthly Recovery Program Dinner (\$16/head) is held at 6:30 pm on the third Wednesday of each month, at Raffaello Ristorante, 400 S. Pacific Ave., in San Pedro.

Iraqi unionists fight two-headed occupation

Escorted by the ILWU longshore Local 10 drill team, Hassan Juma'a Awad, president of Iraq's General Union of Oil Employees (GUOE) strode into St. Joseph the Worker Church in Berkeley, California June 19. GUOE General Secretary Fateh Abboud Umara walked beside him as the 250 people in the church stood clapping and cheering, some with fists in the air.

Juma'a and Abboud came to the Bay Area as part of a 25-city tour organized and sponsored by U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW). Six Iraqi union leaders, representing three of Iraq's major post-Saddam labor federations, toured the U.S. between June 10 and 25. Two representatives of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) toured the East Coast and two from the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI) went to the Midwest, while the brothers from GUOE came west. The six headlined a total of 45 events and 10 press conferences, speaking to thousands of working people, union and social justice activists and religious, community and political leaders, including members of Congress.

Members of the ILWU family organized or co-sponsored several of the West Coast events. Longshore Local 10 and marine clerks' Local 34 welcomed Abboud to their June 16 membership meetings, passing the hat and raising more than \$1,200 for the tour. The Harry Bridges Institute hosted a tour of the Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor June 17, followed by a luncheon that drew more than 70 labor and community activists. These included ILWU Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, marine clerks' Local 63 President Adrian Diaz and members of Locals 13, 63 and 94, as well as the IBU, the Pensioners' Club and Ladies Auxiliary #8.

The ILWU International opened its offices for a press conference June 20. Members of longshore Local 8 met with the Iraqis at Portland's Terminal 6 June 22 and provided security for



Hassan Juma'a Awad, president of Iraq's General Union of Oil Employees (GUOE) strode into St. Joseph the Worker Church in Berkeley.

them until they left for Seattle, where longshore Local 19 co-sponsored a rally in front of Stevedoring Services of America headquarters June 23.

"The ILWU has looked at the situation in Iraq very hard and examined all the issues," said International Secretary-Treasurer William E. Adams in welcoming attendees to the press conference. "At our last Executive Board meeting [March/April 2005] the ILWU went on record with a resolution that calls on Bush to bring the troops home from Iraq now and reject the philosophy of pre-emptive war."

The Iraqi unionists' tour threw a spotlight on the hardships caused by the military occupation and the corporate invasion that has come with it, and on the common problems faced by working people in Iraq and the U.S.

Since the U.S. invasion, unemployment has spiked to 70 percent in some parts of Iraq. Wages have fallen, the cost of living has skyrocketed and infrastructure remains in shambles.

"They have destroyed our electricity, our water, our factories, even schools and hospitals," said Juma'a.

"Our communities have been attacked with chemicals and cluster bombs and our people have been tortured, raped and killed in our homes."

Unions have been outlawed and their leaders arrested and assassinated—but pressed by necessity, workers have kept organizing to confront the abuses. (See story pages 6-7.)

Most recently, Iraqi unions have stepped up the fight against privatization.

"The second front of the war will be against privatization," Juma'a said. "We see privatization as an attempt to impose a permanent economic occupation to follow the military occupation."

One privatization attempt hit close to home for the ILWU: Stevedoring Services of America got a no-bid contract to privatize the Iraqi port of Um Qasr even before the invasion, as Local 8 President Leal Sundet pointed out when the Iraqis visited Portland.

"With the help of the oil workers, a dock workers' union was established in 2003 and by 2004 SSA was forced out—privatization failed," Sundet said. "Our future and your future are

locked together. We do the same work and have the same enemies—George Bush and the multinational corporations whose only allegiance is money."

USLAW and the Iraqi labor leaders issued a joint statement at the end of the tour calling for an end to the occupation, opposing privatization and highlighting the importance of the labor movements in both countries.

"The bedrock of any democracy is a strong, free and democratic labor movement," it said. "We demand strong labor rights in Iraq at the same time that we strive to reverse the erosion of labor rights in the United States and elsewhere around the world where they are threatened."

Throughout the tour, the brothers from the GUOE spoke a language of solidarity that needed no translation. At the largest public event in Los Angeles, Fernando Suarez of Military Families Speak Out shared the bill with Juma'a and Abboud.

"Suarez told, with obvious grief, the story of his son who was killed after stepping on a cluster bomb in Iraq," said USLAW West Coast Tour Coordinator Kathy Lipscomb. "Later, when it was Faleh Abboud Umarra's turn to speak, he asked for a prayer for the lost soldier and Hassan Juma'a Alwad, sitting on the stage, rose to lead it."

Concluding his talk at St. Joseph's, Abboud held out his arms as if to give a hug, and interlaced his fingers.

"I feel I am among families here," he said, but the audience understood the gesture and started clapping before they heard the translation.

—Marcy Rein

USLAW—a national coalition of 112 labor organizations representing more than four million members—still needs help defraying the \$55,000 cost of the tour, despite the generosity of audiences around the country. If you can help, write a check to "USLAW/Iraq Solidarity Fund," and send it to USLAW, PMB 153, 1718 M St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

US labor delegation visits Vietnamese union workers

by William Adams
ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer

Participated in a U.S. labor delegation to Vietnam from May 14-21, 2005. We met with Vietnamese union leaders and members, toured four work places, and visited historic sights.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the end of what is there called "the U.S. War," not the "Vietnam War." Ten years ago, the U.S. government re-established formal relations with Vietnam. And although trade between the U.S. and Vietnam is growing rapidly and the exchange between our countries continues daily, we still do not have formal relations between our labor movements.

In fact, the ILWU is the only union in the U.S. to have maintained relations with our counterpart in Vietnam, the Vietnamese Maritime Union. The Vietnamese Maritime Union met with us during our visit in Vietnam, and they also sent a delegation to participate in the recent Second Pacific Rim Mining and Maritime seminar hosted the ILWU hosted in Long Beach last May.

The purpose of our labor delegation was to strengthen communication and exchange between unions and workers in Vietnam and the U.S., and to strengthen labor education so that unions and workers can learn from one another. In an era of globalization, this is more important now than ever. The delegation included May Chen, National Vice-President of UNITE-HERE from New York, Tho Do, National Vice-President of UNITE-HERE from San Francisco,

Elaine Bernard, director of the Harvard Trade Union Program Greg Mantsios, director of the Queens College Labor Center, and Kent Wong, director of the UCLA Labor Center.

Vietnam is a very youthful country. Their baby boom occurred after 1975, so 65 percent of the people are under 30. You can feel the youthful energy on the streets of Vietnam. The economy has changed from a state-run system to a mixed economy with a vibrant free market. In the past decade, foreign investment has increased dramatically.

These changes have also brought new challenges for Vietnamese unions. Although union density is very high in the state-run sector, in the private sector it is much lower. Unions are now addressing the need to organize in the private sector, and to negotiate collective bargaining agreements. They have a goal to organize one million new workers in the coming years.

On paper labor laws in Vietnam favor the unions. Within six months, employers are required to recognize the union. Within a year, they are

required to negotiate a contract. Unfortunately, however, the law is not always enforced.

In Hanoi we visited a garment factory and saw good working conditions, including an on-site child-care facility for the workers. We met with the elected union leaders, almost all of whom were women. In fact, the head of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, Cu Thi Hau, is a woman.

We also toured a railway factory that has built many of the trains now used to transport passengers and goods throughout the country. In Ha Tay province, we visited a motorcycle parts plant that was privately owned, one of many in the growing market economy.

In Quang Ninh Province in north-east Vietnam, we stayed at a hotel owned and operated by the unions. Union workers who vacation in Vietnam can stay at the union hotels at reduced rates.

We toured an open-pit coal mine where more than 4,000 workers run it around the clock, supplying the country with 90 percent of its coal. There we met with the union leaders who are working to improve safety and health conditions. The leader of the Quang Ninh Labor Federation, Nguyen Ngoc Rau, worked in the mines for 18 years.

Workers and unions in Vietnam are fighting for the same things we are: decent wages, improved working conditions and a better life for ourselves and our children. It is time for the American labor movement to open up communication with unions in Vietnam, and to work together for our mutual interests.



The U.S. labor delegation meets with workers at a garment factory. (From left to right) Tho Do, Secretary Treasurer, UNITE/HERE Local 2, Kent Wong, Director, UCLA Labor Center, Chau Nhat Binh, Deputy Director of the VGCL International Department, William Adams, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer, and Vietnamese Garment Worker Union members.

Oil and freedom: Iraqi workers s

Story and Photos by David Bacon

BASRA, IRAQ (6/29/05)—Originally organized under the British in the early 1920s, the Iraqi oil union has always been the heart of the country's labor movement.

"Iraq's two biggest strikes, in 1946 and 1952, were organized by oil workers," Faleh Abood Umara, general secretary of the newly reorganized General Union of Oil Employees (GUOE), told officers and members of the ILWU during a visit to the West Coast by himself and Hassan Juma'a Awad, the union's president.

Today it is again Iraq's largest, most powerful labor organization, with 23,000 members in southern Iraq. Together with two other labor federations and a handful of independent professional associations, the labor movement is now the biggest institution in Iraqi civil society.

From the very first day of the occupation, Iraqi labor has had to operate in illegal conditions, which has produced a militant and fighting movement, especially in oil. That spirit was evident on the morning of April 9, 2003, the day the US/British invasion started. Workers at Basra's huge, dilapidated oil refinery knew it might come at any moment. Nevertheless, no one expected American tanks when they suddenly pulled up at the gate.

After 30 years of Saddam Hussein, the vast majority had had their fill of war and repression. They were prepared to welcome almost any change that removed the old regime, even foreign troops.

"We were coming out early, at the end of our shift, and there was the American army," recalled Faraj Arbat, one of the plant's firemen. "We were ready to say, 'Hello.'"

Instead of greeting the workers and acting like their liberators, however, the soldiers trained guns on them. The head of the fire department made the mistake of questioning the troops, and was ordered to lie facedown on the ground.

"Abdulritha was absolutely shocked," Arbat recalled. "He was going home. Why should he lie down? But he did as he was ordered. Then an American put his foot on his back. So we started fighting with the soldiers with our fists, because we didn't understand. The tank turret started to turn toward us, and at that point we all sat down."

Someone easily could have died that day. As it was, the memory of the foot on Abdulritha's back left a bitter taste.

The refinery's workers had already labored through the shelling and fires of two decades of conflict, including the "shock and awe" bombing prior to the invasion. Some fled the arriving troops, but most stayed and tried to bring the plant back into operation.

"Slowly we got production restored, by our own efforts," Arbat said. "Electricity workers, at their own expense, brought power back to the refinery. We found where the water pipes had been blown up and went out with armed guards to repair them. Meanwhile, the Americans and British began com-

ing with tanker trucks, loading up on the gas and oil we were producing."

For two months, no one got paid. Finally, Arbat and a small group began to organize a union.

"At first the word frightened people, because under Saddam unions had become instruments of oppression," he explained.

Nevertheless, a few dozen of the refinery's 3,000 employees came together and chose Arbat (whom they affectionately call Abu, or Uncle, Rebab) and Ibrahim Radiy to lead them.

To force authorities to pay the workers, the small group took a crane out to the gate and lowered it across the road. Behind it, two dozen tanker trucks pulled up with a heavily armed British military escort.

"At first there were only 100 of us, but workers began coming out," Arbat said. "Some took their shirts off and told the troops, 'Shoot us.' Others lay down on the ground."

Ten of them even went under the tankers, brandishing cigarette lighters. They announced that if the soldiers fired, they would set the tankers alight.

The soldiers, mostly sons of workers themselves, did not fire. Instead, negotiations began between the general director and the occupation authorities in Basra. By the end of the day the workers had their pay. Within a week, everyone at the refinery joined, and the oil union in Basra was reborn.

ORGANIZING FOR JOBS AND AGAINST PRIVATIZATION

Like other unions in Iraq's state-owned enterprises, the oil union has had to function as an illegal organization. That hasn't kept unions from organizing to successfully challenge the occupation, however. In fact, the first big fight over the U.S. and British economic program came within a few months of the confrontation at the Basra refinery gate. KBR, a subsidiary of the oil services giant Halliburton, was one of the corporate camp followers arriving in the wake of the troops. KBR was given a no-bid contract to put out war-caused oil fires in the huge Rumeila fields, but once its foot was in the door, its presence spread rapidly. Within weeks, it had taken over the financial functions of Basra's civil administration. Workers, in order to get paid, had to take their time sheets to local KBR offices for approval. Those who had fled the advancing troops had to get company permission to return to their jobs.

Then KBR claimed the work of reconstructing wells, pipelines and other oil facilities, and hired a Kuwaiti contractor, Al Khoorafi, to bring in a foreign workforce. Meanwhile, the company used its presence in the oil fields to try to hire drilling rig workers away from the Iraqi Drilling Company, a national enterprise. Despite promises of higher wages, few took the bait. Nevertheless, Iraqi oil workers were outraged. With unemployment hovering at 70 percent, they saw a clear threat to their jobs. But according to Juma'a Awad, workers had other concerns as well.

"We organized the union for two reasons," he said. "First, we had to deal with the administration put in place by the occupying forces. Second, we're afraid that the purpose of the occupation is to take control of the oil industry. It is our duty as Iraqi workers to protect the oil installations, since they are the property of the Iraqi people. We're sure that U.S. and international companies are here to put their hands on the oil."

By August 2003, oil workers had organized unions in ten state-owned companies in southern Iraq and formed the General Union of Oil Employees (GUOE). They gave KBR an Aug. 20 deadline to leave the oil sector. When the company refused to talk with them, they shut down oil production for export.

"For two days we didn't move," said Farouk Sadiq, a union leader and teacher at Basra's Oil



Hashimia Mohsen al Hussein, the president of the Basra engineering union that represents workers at electrical power stations, is the first woman to head a national union in Iraq. Mohsen condemns the management of the power industry for refusing to talk with the union, citing Saddam Hussein's law banning unions for workers in the public sector. She also condemns the contracting of jobs to foreign companies, especially given Iraq's unemployment rate of 50-70 percent.

Institute. "We refused to pump a single drop until they left. We said we wanted them to leave by peaceful means—otherwise we had another language to speak with them. Other workers in Basra refused to work too, and the American authority saw we could affect what really matters to them. It was independence day for oil labor."

KBR did leave the oil districts, and closed their offices in Basra.

In December the union challenged the wage orders of Paul Bremer, civilian administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, threatening to strike again if wages were lowered. This time, the oil minister caved in without a work stoppage. Eventually, the bottom two wage grades were abolished in the oil industry, bringing the base wage up to about \$85 per month.

The GUOE then helped workers organize their own union in the power generation plants. Hashimia Mohsen al Hussein was elected president, the first woman to head a national union in Iraq. In January 2004, unrest spread to the Najibeeya, Haarthia and Al Zubeir electrical generating stations, where workers mounted a wildcat strike, stormed the administration buildings, declared the lower September wage schedule void and vowed to shut off power if salaries were not raised. Again the ministry agreed to return to the old scale.

Last June the union organized large demonstrations to protest government decisions to hire private contractors to do reconstruction work, replacing the industry's own employees. The problem persists.

"We will confront them if they don't stop," Mohsen warned. "Many Basra workers have already agreed to join us in a general strike."

On the ground in southern Iraq a new labor movement is being born. Some unions, like the oil workers, are independent. Others, like those for power and longshore workers, are affiliated to the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). They all cooperate in confronting the occupation's economic policies for keeping wages low, subcontracting jobs and privatizing major industrial enterprises.

In May the GUOE organized a conference at the cultural center of the oil industry in downtown Basra under a banner calling on Iraqis "To revive the public sector and build an Iraq free of privatization." Bringing together union leaders from rigs and refineries, economists from Basra University, representatives of the IFTU and political parties from the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq to Iraq's Communists, the conference sought to forge a consensus to resist oil privatization.

"The public sector economy of Iraq is one of the symbols of the achievement of Iraqis since the revolution of July 4th, 1958," the conference statement declared.

According to oil industry analyst Greg Muttitt, who attended the conference representing the British organization Platform, a non-governmental organization concerned with issues of globalization, it is unlikely that oil reserves themselves would be sold, or that a foreign company or government would be given a concession like the one the British held for over three decades. Other than the U.S., no other country permits those forms of ownership.

"More likely, Iraq's debt will be used to force



Hassan Juma'a Awad, the head of the General Union of Oil Employees, the largest and most powerful union in Iraq, was organized after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

struggle for rights and resources

the government to sign production-sharing agreements with the multi-nationals,” Muttitt said.

Such agreements would allow a foreign company to extract the oil, sell it to pay itself for the costs of extraction—by its own calculation—and split the remainder of the income with the government.

Iraq’s government would be locked into long-term, disadvantageous agreements, in which it would lose control over most decisions regarding oil exploitation, pricing, income and jobs. Oil workers would likely suffer massive layoffs and lose their leverage over production. Juma’a Awad stressed that without the oil income, Iraq will be unable to rebuild from the war.

“Oil is the first step in jump-starting the economy,” he said. “We don’t want to pay the cost of globalization.”

While rank-and-file workers are unfamiliar with the details of production-sharing agreements, they are suspicious of privatization, despite the carrot of modernization used by its defenders to make it attractive. In the Basra refinery, senior fireman Abdul Faisal Jaleel criticizes Saddam Hussein’s long failure to invest in modern technology, or even spare parts, and said workers paid the price.

“We’ve been like the camel that carries gold, but is given thorns to eat.” Nevertheless, he said, foreign ownership is not the answer. “We reject foreign investment. We want to keep our own oil revenues and use them to develop our country with our own hands.”

Unions are suspicious of Iraq’s elite political class, returning from exile and enamored with the ideology of the market economy. But they recognize that the government only nominally holds the power to make these economic decisions, and that the real push to privatize comes from Washington and London. This is just one reason why all Iraqi unions call for an end to the occupation and the cancellation of the country’s foreign debt.

They don’t agree on timing or method. The GUOE calls for immediate withdrawal of foreign troops. The IFTU says an elected Iraqi government should use UN resolution 1545 to ask them to leave. The Federation of Workers’ Councils and Unions of Iraq (FWCUI), Iraq’s other main labor federation (outside of Kurdistan), calls for UN troops to intervene to supply security. But Abood Umara voiced their common perception that the economic plan of the occupation would bring Iraq back to the early 1950s, before oil was nationalized and Iraq was ruled by the British behind the facade of a native monarchy.

UNIONS AS TARGET OF TERROR AND TROOPS

The occupation, however, is not their only enemy. On Feb. 18, Ali Hassan Abd, a leader of the IFTU-affiliated union at Baghdad’s Al Daura oil refinery, was walking home with his young children, when gunmen ran up and shot him. Less than a week later, armed men gunned down Ahmed Adris Abbas in Baghdad’s Martyrs’ Square. Adris Abbas was an activist in the Transport and Communications Union, another IFTU affiliate. The murder of the two followed the torture and assassination of Hadi Saleh, the IFTU’s international secretary, in Baghdad Jan. 4.

Abood Umara refers to them all as “our leaders” despite the fact that the GUOE is not part of the IFTU, and condemns terrorism and assassination. He adds that a bomb was found in the car of a GUOE member earlier this year, fortunately before it was detonated, and that Hassan Juma’a Awad has received death threats.

Last fall, armed insurgents attacked freight trains, killing four workers in November, and beating and kidnapping others a month later. Service was suspended between Basra and Baghdad after workers threatened to strike over lack of security.

They say they’re being blamed for helping the occupation by doing their jobs, although the trains don’t carry military goods.

“It’s [a risk for all] civil society organizations, including trade unions,” Saleh explained at a meeting of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Japan in December, just before his murder. “Extremists who target trade unionists, both teachers and engineers, kill them under the notion that they are collaborating with a state created by the Americans, so by definition those are collaborators and legitimate targets.”

Attacks come from the government and U.S. occupation troops as well. Baghdad’s Transport and Communication workers were thrown out of their office in the city’s central bus station in December 2003 by U.S. soldiers, who then arrested members of the IFTU executive board. Qasim Hadi, general secretary of the Union of the Unemployed (part of the



Felah Abood Umara, general secretary of the GUOE, with other leaders of the union.

FWCUI), was arrested several times by occupation troops, for leading demonstrations of unemployed workers demanding unemployment benefits and jobs. Last fall, when textile workers in Kut struck over pay, the city governor called out the Iraqi National Guard, which fired on them, wounding four.

In the broader context of anti-union violence, IFTU leaders are probably singled out as a response to the union’s position on the January elections, another issue on which Iraqi unions disagree.

“The IFTU supports democratic principles,” explained Ghasib Hassan, head of the IFTU’s Railway and Aviation Union. “And one of those principles is elections. So we supported them.”

The IFTU, like other Iraqi labor federations, has close relations with a set of political parties, in its case the Iraqi Communist Party (with two ministers in the current government), the Iraqi National Accord of outgoing Prime Minister Issad al Allawi and a party of Arab nationalists.

The FWCUI condemned the balloting. “Its purpose was to impose the American project on Iraq, and give legitimacy to the government imposed by the occupying coalition,” President Falah Alwan said.

The FWCUI is allied with the small Workers Communist Party of Iraq. The oil union, which took no position on the election, is independent both of other union federations and of political parties.

LOOKING FOR A NEW IRAQ

While Iraq’s new unions see different methods and timing for getting rid of the occupation, all agree it should go as soon as possible. But they are not only some of the occupation’s main critics on the ground—they also uphold a vision of an alternative future that has inspired progressive Iraqis for decades. Labor’s veterans remember the heady days of the 1958 revolution, when organizing unions, breaking up the big estates and building public housing for the urban poor were not just

dreams, but government policy. Oil was eventually nationalized, and before Saddam Hussein’s wars, the revenue was used to build universities, hospitals and big government-owned factories.

In the U.S., where people know little of Iraqi history, that vision is unknown. Yet millions of Iraqis have a long record of supporting progressive ideas and paid for their ideals with death and prison. Unionists, women’s rights advocates, teachers, journalists and members of progressive political parties see Iraq as a peaceful country, with a government committed to social justice, using its oil wealth to give common people a decent chance at life.

Whether they have a real opportunity to develop a progressive, democratic future depends on more than their efforts alone. Creating the political space needed by Iraqi civil society also depends on the actions of an anti-war constituency in the U.S. Six Iraqi trade unionists, from the GUOE, IFTU and FWCUI, toured 25 U.S. cities for two weeks in June, to help their union counterparts understand the cost of the war in a new way (see story page 5). They all called on U.S. labor to press the U.S. government to end the occupation.

U.S. Labor Against the War, which brings together anti-war forces in U.S. unions and organized the Iraqis’ visit, is waging a fight within the AFL-CIO to win a call for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. The ILWU was the first union in the AFL-CIO to adopt such a position, and was followed by other major AFL-CIO affiliates, including SEIU, CWA, AFSCME, Graphic Communications, Mailhandlers (part of the Laborers), and numerous state, district and local bodies. USLAW has campaigned for Congressional action to end the ban on Iraqi unions, and raised money to help them survive.

“International cooperation,” USLAW coordinator Gene Bruskin said, “can provide significant political muscle to change U.S. policy, both on war and privatization, and help those forces in Iraq which want a progressive and democratic future.”



Drilling a new well in the South Rumeila field (Iraq’s largest).

ILWU Reading List

Over the years, several books have been written about the ILWU. The following list, compiled by ILWU Director of Educational Services Gene Vrana, details the author, title, publisher, price, main subject or theme, and availability of these books. These and other publications about the ILWU can also be read at the ILWU Library.

Brown, Lee and Robert Allen. **Strong in the Struggle: My Life as a Black Labor Activist.** Rowman & Littlefield, 2001. Hardcover: \$26.95. A stirring account of an African American man’s lifelong commitment to left-wing political activism, much of it in service to the ILWU in New Orleans. Bookstores and libraries.

Buchanan, Roger. **Dock Strike: History of the 1934 Waterfront Strike in Portland, Oregon.** The Working Press, 1975. Valuable primarily because it illuminates the Columbia River experience. University libraries.

Bulcke, Germain. **Longshore Leader and ILWU-PMA Arbitrator.** Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California at Berkeley, 1984. The oral history and anecdotal account of Bulcke’s San Francisco career as a member and officer of the ILWU. University libraries.

Fairley, Lincoln. **Facing Mechanization: The West Coast Longshore Plan.** Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Los Angeles, 1979. An overview of the origins and early impact of the historic longshore Modernization and Mechanization agreements 1960-1971, by the late ILWU Research Director and Area Arbitrator. University Libraries.

Finlay, William. **Work On The Waterfront: Worker Power and Technological Change in a West Coast Port.** Temple University Press, 1988 (\$24.95). A provocative analysis of the impact of longshore mechanization and higher wages on ILWU members and union militancy, primarily in Los Angeles. University libraries and bookstores, or from the publisher.

Fox, Joan, editor. **A History of Federated Auxiliaries of the ILWU 1934-1984.** Federated Auxiliaries, 1993. A thorough compilation of histories of local auxiliaries and the Federation. For ordering information and availability contact ILWU Auxiliary #3, c/o ILWU Local 19, 3440 E. Marginal Way, South, Seattle, WA 98134.

Goldblatt, Louis. **Working Class Leader in the ILWU 1935-1977.** Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California at Berkeley, 1980. The oral history and anecdotal account of Goldblatt’s career, in California and Hawaii, primarily as Secretary-Treasurer of the ILWU.

Hartman, Paul. **Collective Bargaining and Productivity: The Longshore Mechanization Agreement.** University of California Press, 1969. University libraries.

Hinkle, Warren. **The Big Strike: A Pictorial History of the San Francisco General Strike.** Silver Dollar Books, 1985. Stunning photographs and an informative narrative. University libraries.

Holmes, T. Michael. **The Specter of Communism in Hawaii.** University of Hawaii Press, 1994. Perhaps the best overview of political persecution in the name of anticommunism, and the central role of the ILWU as both a target and a rallying point for resistance. University libraries and the publisher.

ILWU. **The ILWU Story: Six Decades of Militant Unionism.** ILWU, 1997. An informative combination of oral histories, photographs, and historical narrative about the ILWU. Check *The Dispatcher* for ordering information.

ILWU. **Men and Machines: A Story about Longshoring on the West Coast Waterfront.** ILWU & PMA, 1963. An extraordinary pictorial essay about the Union and technological change. Out of print. ILWU local union offices.

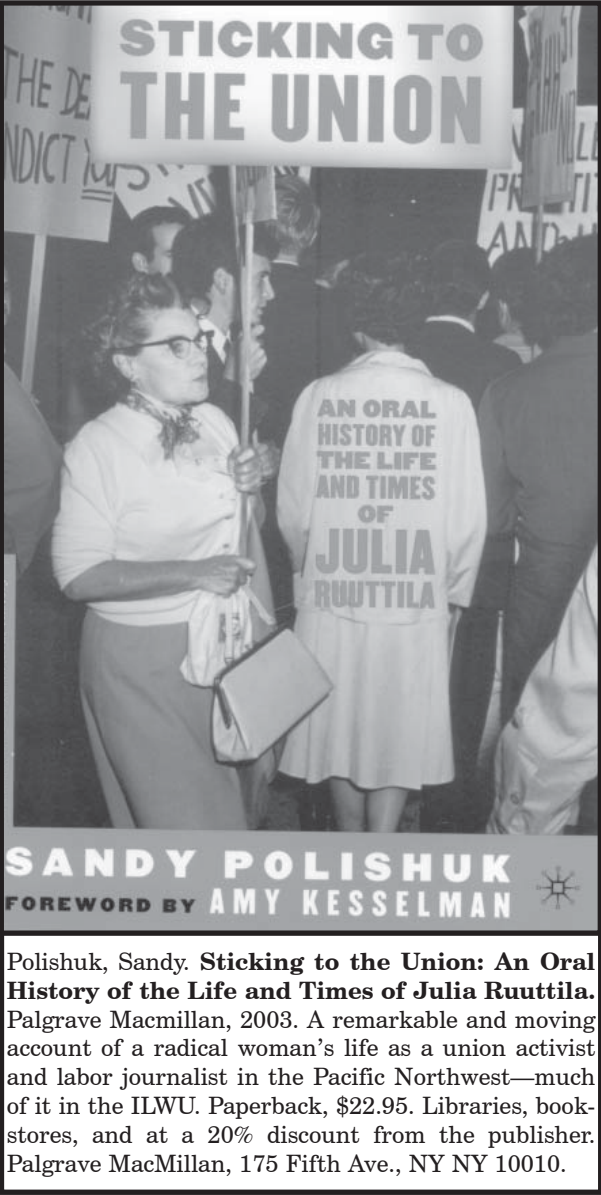
ILWU Local 500. **Man Along The Shore! The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront.** ILWU Local 500 Pensioners, 1975. The only book about the ILWU longshore experience in Canada, told plainly and effectively through interviews and illustrations. Newly re-issued. Contact the Local 500 Service Committee for ordering information at (604) 254-7131.

Jenkins, David. **The Union Movement, The California Labor School, and San Francisco Politics, 1926-1988.** Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, 1993. The oral history of an ILWU stalwart, with rare insights into the Union’s leadership and the CIO. University libraries.

Kimeldorf, Howard. **Reds Or Rackets: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront.** University of California Press, 1988 (\$24.95). Paperback: \$13.00. An innovative analysis of how and why the ILWU rank and file built the union, and often took a different course than the ILA. Libraries, bookstores.

Larrowe, Charles. **Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the United States.** Lawrence Hill & Co., 1972. An unauthorized but respectful biography that highlights the trials and triumphs of Harry Bridges. Out of print. Libraries.

Magden, Ronald E. **The Working Longshoreman.** ILWU Local 23 and the Washington Commission for the Humanities, 1991. A comprehensive and balanced narrative of longshore unionization in Tacoma the Northwest. ILWU Local 23 and university libraries. Available by mail from John Usorac, ILWU Local 23, 1306 Alexander Ave. E, Fife, WA 98424 (\$12.00 per copy, checks or money orders only, payable to ILWU Book Fund).



Polishuk, Sandy. **Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila.** Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. A remarkable and moving account of a radical woman’s life as a union activist and labor journalist in the Pacific Northwest—much of it in the ILWU. Paperback, \$22.95. Libraries, bookstores, and at a 20% discount from the publisher. Palgrave MacMillan, 175 Fifth Ave., NY NY 10010.

Magden, Ron. **A History of Seattle Waterfront Workers 1884-1934.** ILWU Local 19 and the Washington Commission for the Humanities, 1991. An invaluable account of longshore unionization in the Northwest, particularly Seattle and the Puget Sound region. Available by mail from David Vigil, Sr., ILWU Local 19, 3440 East Marginal Way South, Seattle, WA 98134 (checks or money orders only in the amount of \$15.00 per copy, payable to the ILWU Local 19 Centennial).

Markholt, Otilie. **Maritime Solidarity: Pacific Coast Unionism 1929-1938.** Pacific Coast Maritime History Committee, 1998. Paperback: \$15.00 (plus \$3.50 shipping). A unique and controversial contribution to the history of the ILWU in the Northwest by a veteran union activist, notable for its original scholarship and strident criticism of Harry Bridges and the CIO. Available by mail from the Pacific Coast Maritime History Committee, 3049 S. 36th Street, Suite 201, Tacoma, WA 98409; Telephone: (253) 473-3810.

Nelson, Bruce. **Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality.** Princeton University Press, 2001. Hardcover: \$39.50. A new and controversial analysis of race, ethnicity, and class solidarity among longshore and steel workers that focuses primarily on the ILA and ILWU experiences in New York, New Orleans, and Los Angeles. Bookstores and libraries.

Nelson, Bruce. **Workers On The Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the**

1930s. University of Illinois Press, 1988. Hardcover: \$29.95. The most comprehensive discussion of the growth of maritime unions on the Pacific Coast. Libraries, bookstores. Paperback edition available from the ILWU library by mail at a discount— watch *The Dispatcher* for details.

Pilcher, William. **The Portland Longshoremen: A Dispersed Urban Community.** Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972. A narrow sociological study of how the Union’s solidarity has been affected by the political and ethnic roots of the rank and file. University libraries.

Quin, Mike. **The Big Strike.** Olema Publishing Co., 1949, and New World Paperbacks, 1979 (re-issue). The classic and comprehensive account of the San Francisco General Strike of 1934. Libraries. Paperback edition only, \$7.50. Available from the ILWU library at a discount—watch *The Dispatcher* for details.

Raineri, Vivian McGuckin. **The Red Angel.** International Publishers, 1991. A stirring account of the activist life and political times of Elaine Black Yoneda (1906-1988), including her role in the 1934 strike and the ILWU Auxiliaries. Libraries and the publisher.

Roger, Sidney. **A Liberal Journalist on the Air and on the Waterfront: Labor and Political Issues 1932-1990.** Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California at Berkeley, 1998. University Libraries. An articulate insider’s view of the ILWU and the labor movement by the late labor communicator and former editor of *The Dispatcher*.

Schmidt, Henry. **Secondary Leadership In The ILWU 1933-1966.** Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California at Berkeley, 1983. The oral history and anecdotal account of Schmidt’s San Francisco career as a member and officer of the ILWU. University libraries.

Schneider, Betty, and Abraham Siegel. **Industrial Relations In The Pacific Coast Longshore Industry.** Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley, 1956. A traditional but insightful look at the role of the ILWU in transforming longshore labor relations, focusing on pivotal bargaining in 1948. University libraries.

Schwartz, Harvey. **The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938.** Re-issued by the ILWU with new preface and photographs (first published by the Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Los Angeles, in 1978). The only comprehensive study of the ILWU’s organizing campaign in warehouse and distribution. Watch *The Dispatcher* for ordering information.

Selvin, David F. **A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strikes in San Francisco.** Wayne State University Press, 1996 (\$26.95). The newest comprehensive narrative history of the strike. Watch *The Dispatcher* for ILWU discount price.

Wellman, David. **The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront.** Cambridge University Press, 1995 (\$59.95, cloth; \$15.95, paper). A sociologist blends history, interviews, and analysis into the best description and appraisal yet written about the strengths, traditions and problems of the ILWU on the waterfront since the 1930s. Available from the ILWU library at a significant discount—watch *The Dispatcher* for details.

Zalburg, Sanford. **A Spark Is Struck! Jack Hall and the ILWU in Hawaii.** University Press of Hawaii, 1979. An epic account of the birth of the ILWU in Hawaii, and the Union’s role in the social, economic, and political transformation of Hawaii. University libraries. Out of print.

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Docker art on the internet

by Tom Price

The website Laborarts.org displays the artifacts of labor history—the murals, union buttons, paintings, photos, leaflets and sheet music. The ILWU features prominently in this virtual art museum.

Paintings and watercolors by James Grosso and Pele deLappe currently hanging at the ILWU International headquarters in San Francisco were digitalized and loaded onto the site, along with photos from the ILWU library. At the request of the AFL-CIO, ILWU International President Jim Spinosa appointed Gene Vrana, Director of Educational Services and Librarian, to coordinate a project to get ILWU art online.

Oakland-born longshoreman James Grosso painted realistic pictures of life on the waterfront in the mid-1950s. His pictures show the history of the union from the early days of the shape-up to the union hiring hall and the 1948 strike.

Grosso served in the Marines in WWII, studied art in California,

Rome and Florence, and worked on the docks in the early 1950s. At the time, he later wrote, he was active in “various political organizations, peace and civil rights groups—but most, if not all—were on the Attorney General’s subversive list, so I guess they’re best not mentioned.”

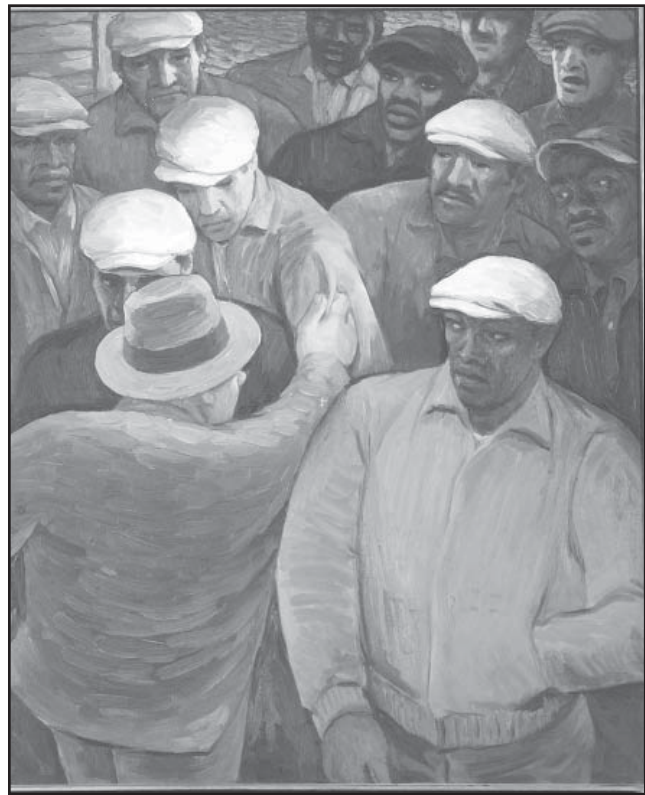
Pele deLappe was only 18 when she walked the line in the 1934 dockers’ strike in San Francisco. She raised money for union families, drew cartoons for the Marine Workers Industrial Union’s newsletter *Fo’c’sle Head* and was arrested on the line for vagrancy. She was also known for her ability to holler loudly from the back of a truck to rally the strikers.

A few months after the strike the union commissioned her to paint eight maritime workers’ portraits for a mural. The mural was never completed and the watercolors languished in storage for 60 years. She recently donated them to the ILWU. One of her inspirations in painting the men came from seeing public murals in Mexico painted by people like Diego Rivera and Freida Kahlo, whom she worked with in San Francisco as a young art student.

“It was moving and beautiful to see people saying ‘this is our history, this is our life,’” she told *The Dispatcher* in a 2003 interview.

Otto Hagel shot photos of ordinary people for *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune* and other magazines during the Depression. Hagel and his wife Meith were part of a progressive movement of photographers and artists in the 1930s and 1940s who, like Otto, were sometimes blacklisted for their politics.

His photos appear in two books co-published by the ILWU: “Men and Ships: A Pictorial of the



James Grasso's "Shape Up"

LOCAL 5 GIVES THANKS AND LOOKS AHEAD



Bette Lee

ILWU International Vice President Bob McEllrath (right) received a special signed poster from warehouse, retail and allied workers Local 5 Vice President James Dexter at the local’s May membership meeting.

“We wanted to thank Bob for all the help he gave us in our last contract negotiations,” Local 5 President Kristi Lovato said. Local 5 member Scott Ryan designed the “Powell’s Shanty Town of Books” poster, a take-off on Powell’s “City of Books” promotion. “Shanty Town” draws in lurid detail “the future quality of life for the average Powell’s worker without our union and a fair contract.”

“Members of the bargaining team and internal organizing committee signed the poster—all the people Bob worked closely with at the table and rabble-rousing in the house,” Lovato said.

The agreement signed in late March 2004 preserved affordable health care, provided modest wage increases and gave the union stronger language to protect people on the job. It was the second contract between Local 5 and Powell’s, the largest independent bookstore in the U.S.

You can help Local 5 thrive by going through its Web site (ilwulocal5.com) to buy books online from Powell’s. See the box on page 8 for instructions.

Maritime Industry” and “Men and Machines: A Story About Longshoring on the West Coast Waterfront.”

Hagel’s 1959 photo of Harry Bridges addressing the membership and pictures of life on the docks are included in the laborarts.org site.

Another of those artists whose realism transcended into a powerful humanism was photographer Dorothea Lange. Her images of ordinary people caught up in the class war called the Great Depression humanized these people to the point where they looked like family or neighbors, which they often were.

She took pictures Japanese people imprisoned as “enemy aliens” during

WWII. One of these, unfortunately not in this exhibit, is of longshore Local 10’s Karl Yoneda, who was interned at Manzanar before joining the U.S. Army. His quiet dignity personalized Japanese people in a period of severe racism. Lange’s contribution to this exhibit includes an unflattering picture of Harry dated May Day, 1934, and a shot of two longshoremen.

To see it yourself, go to www.laborarts.org. Click on “Exhibits” at the top, then click on “Art from the waterfront” for the paintings or “Images from the waterfront” for the photos. Most libraries have free internet access.

Celebrate Labor Day weekend with a salute to longshoreman and labor organizer Harry Bridges

At a Special Screening of

“From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks”

The story of Harry Bridges and the ILWU.

Narrated by Elliott Gould and Ed Asner with a soundtrack by Jackson Browne, Arlo Guthrie and others.

The special screening will be held simultaneously in

San Pedro, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle Sunday, September 4 beginning at 7:00 pm

All tickets are \$10 All ILWU pensioners (including spouses) are invited to come as our guests, i.e., free.

Venues

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Grand Warner Theater
478 West 6th Street

Tickets available at:

The Harry Bridges Institute Community Labor Center, 350 West Fifth Street Suite 209
San Pedro, CA 90731, Open Monday-Thursday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. 310-831-2397
Or email at sdonato@harrybridges.com

Portland

The Guild Theater
829 SW 9th Avenue
Portland, OR 97205

Tickets – 503-228-5047

San Francisco

Palace of Fine Arts Theatre
3301 Lyon Street, S.F., CA 94123

For advanced tickets please telephone City Box Office at (415) 392-4400 - after July 15. Tickets also available at the door day of performance. For VIP Reception information please phone 415- 971-7291 or e-mail christielward@sbcglobal.net.

The San Francisco screening will be preceded by a reception hosted by actor Ian Ruskin, who portrays Harry Bridges in the film. Reception tickets are \$100 For additional information click on www.theharrybridgesproject.org

Seattle

The Meany Theatre is located on the west edge of the University of Washington campus, just minutes from the NE 45th Street exit off I-5. Limited covered parking is available for a fee underneath the theater in the Central Parking Garage located at 15th Avenue NE at 41st Street. Other paid parking is designated by stripes on the map.

Tickets: 206-257-9838

Ian Ruskin as Harry Bridges in "From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks."



Five years ago British-born actor Ian Ruskin created a one-person, one-act play recreating the struggles, victories and passions of union organizer and ILWU leader/founder Harry Bridges. In many of Harry’s own words—sometimes serious, sometimes funny—Ruskin brings Harry to life. From his rallying speeches of the 1930’s to his electrifying testimony at his many trials, the piece spans Bridges’ life from his childhood in Australia until near his retirement in the 1970s. Included are the 1934 General Strike in San Francisco, the groundbreaking Mechanization and Modernization and the constant controversy of a politically-charged union. Two years ago Ruskin performed the play to a packed house of longshoreman at the Warner Grand Theater in San Pedro. Haskell Wexler, multi Academy Award winning director of the 1969 film “Medium Cool,” filmed it. The result, “FROM WHARF RATS TO LORDS OF THE DOCKS,” features Ruskin’s performance blended with interviews from salty old labor veterans who knew Harry and current ambitious union workers talking about organizing today.



PEOPLE

George Walsh: 'unfriendly witness'



George Walsh

by Tom Price

The ILWU and longshore Local 10 lost one of its legends when George Walsh died May 25.

He was born of immigrant parents 94 years ago in New York and grew up in a walk-up flat in the Bronx.

They weren't a rich family, but they had classical music records, there were books to read and he was surrounded by the cultural excitement of the city, according to his son Michael, a former warehouse Local 6 member.

"He enjoyed reading and poetry, but most of all, sports," Michael Walsh said. "Coming of age in the Great Depression meant that families struggled to make ends meet, and the dreams of college and professional life seemed impossible. But after high school, he found work teaching sports to the tough street kids in a New York settlement house."

At the same time George's future wife Nadia was growing up in San Francisco. She lived on Potrero Hill and her mother and stepfather worked in the South of Market Street factories.

"She had exceptional reading and writing skills, but the Depression made leaving home and finding work a top priority," Michael said. She and some friends decided to strike out for New York, and she found a job working in a summer camp.

"My father was the camp's Sports Director, and they instantly fell in love," Michael said. "They lived together in New York. Low-rent apartments with orange crate bookcases, potluck dinners and rent parties to raise enough money to keep the landlord at bay. Nadia kept talking about San Francisco, and in 1935 they had enough money to buy bus

tickets. Just two young people, holding hands and watching America roll by outside the bus window."

George began work on the San Francisco waterfront as an International Longshoremen's Association docker the following year, a year before the ILA Pacific Coast District became the ILWU. Nadia worked as a secretary for the telegrapher's union and would later become Harry Bridges' secretary. George was involved in the 1936-37 maritime strike and during that time he organized a Christmas party for the kids. He wrote a paragraph on a poster explaining the strike to the kids.

"It's a long story, but it means this: All the big ships that go down to Los Angeles, up to Seattle, over to China and around to New York cannot sail unless the maritime workers are willing to run the ships and load and unload the cargo," it read.

Walsh also organized children's camps such as the 1937 Maritime Children's Camp.

He was a hard-working longshoreman for nearly 13 years when the U.S. Attorney General's office branded him an "unfriendly witness" in the frame-up of Harry Bridges, whom the government tried to prove was a Communist and have him deported back to Australia. Walsh had refused to talk to the grand jury that indicted his brothers, and supported the Bridges, Roberson and Schmidt Defense Committee.

Walsh said the real target of the government's attack was the ILWU itself. The Jan. 29, 1949 issue of *The Dispatcher* reported Walsh's thoughts:

"[Walsh] cited the strike the Hawaii longshoremen have been waging against the Big Five companies which are bent on perpetuating the low wages and semi-feudal economy of the Hawaiian Islands," *The Dispatcher* said.

Walsh continued:

"We, the workers of the ILWU, must at once take up the fight for better conditions or see the forces of reaction gain control of American labor," he said. "The government, through its stoolpigeons and agents within our unions, will stoop to any depths to carry out its hatchet job for the employers...The only crime Harry

ever committed was to organize workers and lead them in their struggle for [better] conditions and self-respect. That is the reason the Dept. of Justice is out to get Bridges."

The government spent 21 years between 1934 and 1955 trying to deport or jail Bridges. For 12 of those years Bridges faced actual trials. He always credited workers like Walsh and the rank and file for defending their union, and he was finally cleared of all charges in 1955.

Walsh ran unsuccessfully for California Secretary of State on the Independent Progressive Party ticket in 1950. He got 309,000 votes on a platform supporting State Fair Employment Practices laws, unemployment relief and adequate pensions. He was against loyalty oaths, witch hunts and the Cold War. The following year he got 30,000 votes in a bid for a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Walsh chaired the committee planning a new Local 10 hall in early 1954, and served on the Bay Area Memorial Longshoremen's Assn. many times as its chair or secretary-treasurer. He held that position when the hall was dedicated in January 1959.

Local 10 members elected him to many union posts, including Vice President, Executive Board and Caucus Delegate, and he chaired many committees including publicity, welfare and healthcare. He dedicated much of his time to help get healthcare benefits for members. He spent the 1960s and 1970s in clerks' Local 34 and retired in 1974.

In retirement Walsh was asked to head the Second Career Program for Senior Citizens sponsored by the local community college in Marin County.

"Deep in his heart, he always wanted to be a college student," Michael said. "All of a sudden, there he was, a counselor with an office, working each day surrounded by young students, teachers, staff members and retirees."

His late son Bernard, also a Local 34 member, died in 2002. Nadia died in 2001.

"Nadia retired shortly after George," Michael said. "As union pensioners they were able to live in financial security, supported by an exceptional health plan."

Hawaii member wins scholarship

by Tom Price

Shop steward Zonette Tam had been working for 10 years toward a nursing degree while balancing her job and family life. Then on May 31 the ILWU Local 142 member received the news—she had won an AFL-CIO Union Plus scholarship. As a worker who helped organize her shop into the ILWU, the win was especially sweet.

"I had been on a career path to get a LPN [Licensed Practical Nurse] degree, but I got accepted into the nursing program at Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa and now this scholarship puts me over the top," Tam said. "I can go for my RN and a bachelor's degree."

Tam came from a solid union family and has worked for eight years as a medical technician at the Straub Clinic and Hospital in Honolulu. Workers organized the clinic into Hawaii Local 142 in the late 1990s and got a first contract in 2001.

"I was at some of the first organizing meetings," Tam said. "I was volunteered to be shop steward because I was the most verbal. Whenever there was trouble with a supervisor, they

would come to me."

The union victory meant Tam was eligible for the scholarship. But things were going rough for the mother of three when she applied last year.

"The past year was hard for me, but my kids were a big help in taking care of the little one while I attended school," she said. "My husband was in Iraq, a week-end warrior became an active warrior for eight months. At one point there seemed to be no light at the end of the tunnel."

Of the 5,500 applicants, 120 won scholarships. These are offered annually through the Union Plus Education Foundation and paid for by the issuers of Union Plus credit cards.

To win the award applicants had



Zonette Tam

to submit an essay of no more than 500 words describing their career goals, detailing their relationship with the union movement and explaining why they are deserving of a union scholarship. Grades and SAT scores were also considered. The judges were people from the American Assn. of Community Colleges, the National Assn. of Independent Colleges and Universities and the United Negro College Fund.

In all, Union Plus awarded \$150,000 this year to students representing 40 AFL-CIO unions. Union Plus has awarded more than \$2 million since 1992 to 1,300 students.

The AFL-CIO created Union Privilege in 1986 to provide con-

sumer benefits under the Union Plus label for current and retired union members and their families. It combines the purchasing power of 13 million members to provide discounts on car rentals and insurance, credit cards, ocean cruises, union-made clothing and many other things. Visit at www.unionplus.org.

Application deadline for the 2006 scholarship is January 31, 2006. The applications will be available in September 2005 on the website www.unionplus.org/scholarships. An application can be had by mail after September by sending a postcard with your name, return address, telephone number and your international union's name to: Union Plus Education Foundation, c/o Union Privilege, PO Box 34800, Washington, D.C. 20043-4800.

Tam will continue working on-call after she begins nursing school in August. She had this to say to the members of AFL-CIO unions:

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart, it wouldn't have been possible to further my education without this award. As we say, *Mahalo*."

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

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

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(310) 547-9966

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

ADRP—Northern California
Norm McLeod
400 North Point
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 776-8363

ADRP—Washington
Donnie Schwendeman
3600 Port of Tacoma Rd. #503
Tacoma, WA 98424
(253) 922-8913

ILWU WAREHOUSE DIVISION

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

ILWU CANADA

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