



# *The* DISPATCHER

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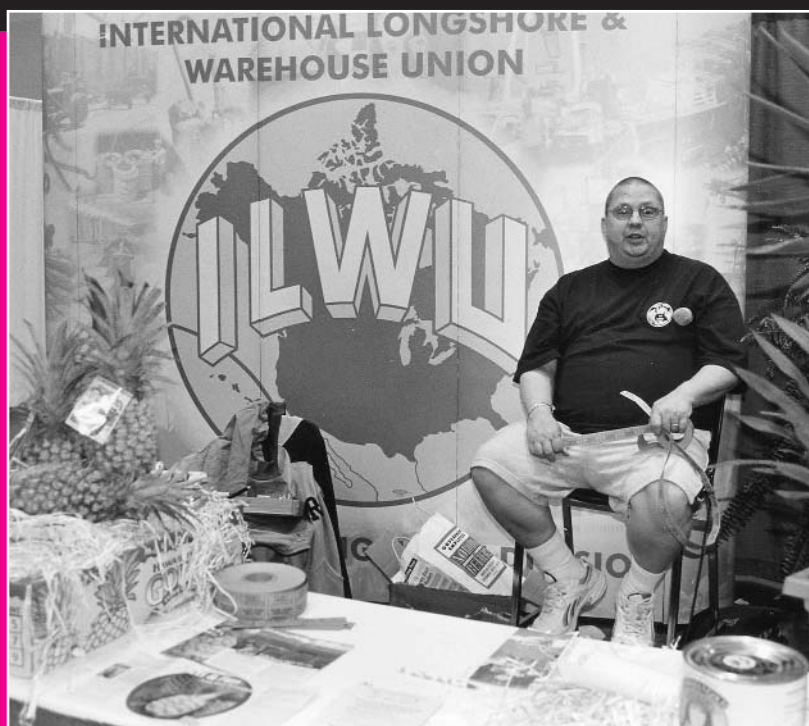
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May 2005



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Inside Line

GRAND THEFT:  
THE GREAT  
RETIREMENT ROBBERY

America is facing a retirement crisis as multinational corporations (MNCs) and national governments conspire to use privatization policies to binge out on one of the few remaining stores of wealth workers still have—their pensions and other retirement savings. Whether it's the Social Security funds that have been siphoned off to pay for tax cuts for the rich and the oil war in Iraq, or pension funding obligations courts allow companies to simply pocket for themselves directly, there is no end to the appetite of capital. After it has chewed up and spit out the workers, it binges on their last remaining means of support.

These MNCs use every available angle to squeeze every last drop from their laborers. It's not enough to take their time and energy five days or more a week. Then it's their health, since workplace protective measures cut too deeply into profits.

Finally it's their contractually guaranteed pensions and retiree health care they worked all their lives for. The MNCs can't even find their way to keeping their promises to the old and infirm.

There is no sympathy, no empathy, no humanity involved in these decisions—just devour without concern. This shows how completely bankrupt—both economically and morally—this system is. It needs to loot every mattress and penny jar, and frankly, my dear, it doesn't give a damn.

So whether through legislative fiat or right-wing judicial activism, you get robbed not just of your retirement money, but also of any hope that there may be some reward and relief in the future. The 21st century is starting to look a whole lot more like the 19th—after a career of toil all you have to look forward to is enforced misery and poverty.

As author and economist Jack Rasmus reports (see page 4), there is a legislative railroad track running parallel to the Social Security privatization bills that will make it easier for corporations to renege on their pension obligations. Some of the various proposals in front of Congressional committees are more outrageous than others, but they include measures that would give corporations from seven to 25 years to make contributions to stabilize under-funded plans (instead of the current two-year requirement), and new complicated formulas for estimating the value of pensions funds that corporations can easily manipulate to their workers' disadvantage.

It's not just the money they want. Union pension trustees are becoming more sophisticated investors. They are not focusing solely on getting a maximum return for their members' investments. They are using their shareholder clout to curb corporate anti-social behavior.

Whether it's exploitative labor practices, environmental destruction or excessive executive compensation, trustees are bringing their concerns to shareholder meetings and pressuring companies to act more responsibly. And that really pisses them off. And that means we must be doing something right.

—Steve Stallone  
Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Building solidarity's two-way street

By James Spinosa  
ILWU International President

Something historic and momentous happened in Long Beach, Calif. May 22-26 that could have significant consequences for the future of the ILWU and the international workers movement. A couple hundred officers and rank and filers of transportation and mining unions from distant lands came together to discuss their plights and to extend hands of solidarity that will stretch across oceans.

The Second Pacific Rim Mining and Maritime seminar built on the successes of the first such gathering in New Castle, Australia in the summer of 2002, bringing together more unions from more countries and renewing and deepening the ties and commitments among them. Throughout the week the delegates networking put into practice the gathering's theme and slogan: "Globalizing solidarity."

As the world economy continues to globalize, as wealth and power continues to consolidate into the hands of fewer and fewer companies, we see the power of those multinational corporations (MNCs) no longer constrained by national boundaries, national governments or national laws. Instead, they are writing new international economic laws (through forums like the WTO) that supersede national and local laws made by people ostensibly elected by the people. So it comes as no surprise that the MNCs "free market" laws leave the multinational corporations unfettered to accumulate, consolidate and dominate entire industries and economies, but workers' unions are considered "labor monopolies" that unfairly restrict economic opportunity and individual choice.

Still, a globalized economy brings its masters a new set of problems, and it brings workers a new set of opportunities and challenges. The new economy is enormously dependent on moving resources around the world, and that dependency is a vulnerability. And since mining unions sit on those resources, and transport unions, particularly maritime unions, sit all along that transportation chain, our position gives us certain power, but also makes us certain targets.

The vicious lockout of Australian dock workers in 1998 and the lockout of ILWU longshore workers in 2002 demonstrate the how seriously the employers understand their dependencies and what lengths they will go to to shore up their position. The multinational mining companies have been even more malicious to their workers and unions. Rio Tinto, the largest mining company in the world and the employer of ILWU members working the huge borax mine in the Southern California desert, also has major operations in Australia and South Africa, home of two of the other mining unions at the Long Beach conference. Rio Tinto is notorious for its anti-union activities and for its flagrant disregard for the local environments it mines.

But because we are such a vital part of such a vital part of the economy we can be of great help to each other when we are having problems with our common employers. For our mutual good, mining and maritime unions need each other—we are natural allies.

The resolution all the mining and maritime unions at Long Beach drafted and enthusiastically embraced recognizes that and

commits us to that—specifically to developing a global communications network for rapid response to political or industrial conflict affecting any of us. Two such conflicts loom on the horizon.

Dockworkers in the Chilean port of Iquique, who supported the ILWU in 2002, went on strike Oct. 15, 2004 demanding a raise from \$29 per day to \$32. They were met by riot police who beat their leader, Jorge Silva Beron, leaving him to bleed to death on the street. Beron survived, but now the government is prosecuting him for his trade union activities and threatening to imprison him. This kind of repression cannot be allowed to happen, in Chile or anywhere.

The other immediate crisis is about to hit Australia. In recent elections the ultra-conservative Liberal Party won a majority in both houses of Parliament. Along with the Liberal Party's Prime Minister John Howard, they have pledged to go all out to eliminate the country's labor movement. These guys make George W. Bush and our Republicans look like moderates. When they take office in the beginning of July, they are planning to pass legislation that will give preference to "individual contracts" over collectively bargained union agreements. Workers will be granted the "freedom" to negotiate their own separate contract with the bosses. But since the laws restricting unfair firings also will be eliminated, workers will be forced to jettison union contracts and accept their employers' terms or lose their jobs. Australian unions—they represent 25 percent of the country's workers, two times the rate in the U.S.—are not going to just accept this without a fight. And they will almost certainly need some help.

This new alliance is an extension of our previous affiliations, national and international. In North America we have a three-party solidarity agreement with the Teamsters and the International Longshoremen's Association (the union that represents longshore workers along the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts as well as the Canadian East Coast). We are pledged to support each others' jobs and jurisdictions as well as aid each others' organizing drives.

The ILWU is also an active member of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), a world wide association of 642 transportation unions, (including maritime, aviation, rail and trucking) in 142 countries. Its vast network of unions, responding as we have many times to their needs, provided immense support during our 2002 longshore lockout.

We are also a founding and sustaining member of the International Dockworkers Council, a more recent grouping of strictly longshore unions that is growing and becoming a force for the international steamship companies and terminal operators to deal with. The IDC was also of great help to the ILWU in 2002. With its new growth and strength forged in the recent fight against European port privatization, it will be another valuable ally come 2008.

The ILWU is investing all these efforts to build solidarity as part of our strategy to be prepared for the 2008 longshore contract bargaining. We need to have these friendships and alliances in place now and not wait until problems are at our doorstep. We need to be prepared in advance to face them and have plans ready to help each other. We have been there for them in their times of need and must continue to be, so they will be there for us.



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# Local 13 workers get life-saving award

by Tom Price

Rodrigo Ortega is alive today thanks to the quick thinking of his fellow casuals and foreman.

For their efforts, the PMA gave its Life Saving Award at the 56th Annual Southern California Area Awards Dinner on March 3 to longshore Local 13 casuals Myra Elliot and Marlene Quintero, and to foreman’s Local 94 Don “Cowboy” Harrison.

About 1:30 a.m. last July 22 casual Ortega began a lashing job on the Hyundai Explorer at Berth 26 in Long Beach. Harrison was on deck.

“Somebody came to me and said somebody got hurt,” Harrison said. “I immediately went to the aft end of the hatch and there was a man in the walkway. He says, ‘Oh, my shoulder.’ I asked if he was able to get down, he says, ‘I’ve only got one hand because I have to use my other hand for my shoulder.’ So I got my arms around him and helped him down to the deck. He says, ‘There’s a hole in my shoulder. If I keep my finger on the hole, I won’t bleed so much.’”

Ortega had been struck in the neck and shoulder by a piece of angle iron one and a half inches on the side and a couple feet long, with a piece of rope on the end of it. Quintero was driving a UTR at the time.

“I got under the hook and I was hanging there for a minute, then another minute passed and I was thinking maybe something’s wrong up there,” Quintero said. “And the signal lady [Myra Elliot] comes up to me, and we have some small talk. Then I heard the boss on the radio saying, ‘Call 911. It’s real bad.’ She got on the radio and said, ‘I’m a nurse. Can I go up there to help?’ I went also because I’m a CNA [Certified Nursing Assistant]. I got to the top of the gangway and I saw Ortega laying on the deck, she had her hands on his neck and there was a lot of blood on the deck.”

Foreman Harrison had gotten Ortega to the deck and used his jacket as a compress. Foreman Dean Spittle was on the radio, organizing the response.

“Safety training kicked in,” Harrison said. “Pressure points, compresses, it absolutely helped.”

“I asked Myra what she wanted me to do,” Quintero said. “She said check his vitals, so I found that his blood pressure was low enough that he was going to go into convulsions really soon. She told me to put my hands on his neck, and I went to apply pressure like I learned in school, and the blood was just coming out everywhere. So I got on my knees



Myra Elliot, Marlene Quintero, Rodrigo Ortega and Harold “Don” Harrison, aka “Cowboy,” at the PMA Safety Awards dinner.

and made my hand into a fist on his neck and it went into his neck, but the blood stopped, and I left it there.

“He woke up and asked me to take my hands out of his neck and I said I couldn’t do that. The ambulance came. I was afraid to take my hand from his neck. I don’t think they knew how bad it really was. I thought if I took my hands away for a second, he would die.”

catwalk,” Tuck said. “They had tied it in place like it was a little bit welded. I gave it to the Coast Guard, and this made it clear that the ship was at fault.”

Tuck got the details of the accident and he and Quintero rode in the ambulance to the hospital.

“Before they took him away I tried to get his name and nobody knew,” Quintero said. “So before they

reunited at the PMA awards dinner.

“I felt a very special bond with him, even though I never met him before in my life,” Quintero said. “He did everything right. He was wearing his hard hat, wearing his vest, he was doing what he should be doing.”

Quintero has worked on the docks for 10 years and registered last October as an ID Casual. Ortega was an unemployed Laborers’ Union member.

“I have five children. When I kiss them before I go to work at night, I don’t know if I’m going to see them the next day,” Quintero said. “That’s the sacrifice I make for this waterfront, and that’s okay with me. The temps get shined on a lot and that’s wrong. They’re there helping us. He put his life on the line with us. He’s a union member, even though it’s not our union.

“I sat next to Rodrigo at the awards. He was with his wife and daughter,” Quintero continued. “I looked at his daughter. She’s the same age as my daughter. I couldn’t imagine that little girl mourning for her dad.”

*‘I thought if I took my hands away for a second, he would die.’*  
—Marlene Quintero

Spittle had arranged for a crane operator to get a half rack ready.

Local 13 BA Norm Tuck arrived almost immediately. He had worked as a shipbuilder and was able to determine where the iron had come from.

“They run a catwalk under the windows of the ship’s superstructure. This iron was a bracket from the

took him down on a flat rack, I reached into his pocket to get his license. There was just a post office box, so I had no way to get hold of the family.”

Elliot and other workers visited Ortega at the hospital, and he recovered from his injuries. The three casuals and foreman Harrison were

# Grain elevator explodes, no injuries

by Tom Price

Workers were changing shifts at 8 p.m. at the Port of Vancouver, Wash. May 25 when several explosions rocked the area. Inside bin six at the United Harvest grain elevator a cloud of grain dust ignited.

“The dust that comes off the grain is very combustible when confined in concentration,” longshore Local 4 President Steve Kadow said. “We had a point of ignition in the tank. It spread to the dust collectors, and we had about three explosions simultaneously.”

Speedy evacuation could be a life and death matter.

“It all happened pretty fast,” said Local 4 millwright Jerry Andrew. “I was standing outside when it happened, and ran into the control room. Steve Hauff, the control console operator, shut everything down and

sounded the alarm. We heard a couple more explosions, then we had to get the hell out of there.”

Fortunately, they were in a building separate from the elevator. It was a time to remember safety training.

“I’ve seen films of elevator explosions, and they say it’s not the first one that gets you, it’s the second or third, because the first one goes off and shakes the building which shakes all the dust off and suspends it in the air, and that’s when the whole thing can go,” Andrews said.

Firefighters had to use carbon dioxide gas to extinguish the fire, as water might not reach burning embers buried under the grain. The method is to close off the tank, pump in carbon dioxide to displace the oxygen. Without oxygen the fire goes out.

Vancouver has experienced about six fires in the last 10 years.

“But the fires never got into the

bins before and caused an explosion,” Kadow said. “They’re usually caused by a roller that disintegrates or a motor that goes bad, that causes a spark and can start a fire.”

Some of the elevator’s wall panels are made of fiberglass instead of corrugated steel.

“Those panels did their job—they opened up and relived the pressure so that the building itself was able to stay intact,” Kadow said.

The huge elevator can load 80,000 bushels per hour and the facility can store 5 million bushels. Local 4 people had been sweeping and cleaning the area, but they had gone off on break and to relieve other positions.

No one works in that locality on a full-time basis. The sweepers go through the area every couple of shifts, and the foremen walk through and check things. While that worked

out for the best in this case, there can be a downside.

“It’s kind of sad that the technology has brought us to this point,” Kadow said. “We used to have 15 or 20 people working in that facility and they were the eyes and ears of the plant. Now there are just two or three and the odds of their catching anything are diminished.”

The cause of the explosion is under investigation. City building engineers are checking the facility, and it could take several months before it’s back on line.

“I had been over there minutes before the explosion, and we had clean up people who were working right there where it blew up,” Andrews said. “They came down for coffee, and were getting ready to go back up when it went. Had it happened minutes later it would have happened with them in it.”



## United Airlines' pensions go bust

# The pension crisis stakes grow higher

by Jack Rasmus

A federal bankruptcy court announced May 10 that United Airlines could pocket \$3.2 billion of contributions it owed its 134,000 current and retired workers' pension plans, and turn over its four pensions to the government's Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). The move will leave the PBGC, the government agency established to insure private companies' pensions, could eventually be saddled with total liabilities from United of \$9.8 billion. This is the largest bailout of a private pension fund in more than three decades, and comes at a time when the PBGC itself faces mounting red ink of tens of billions of dollars and possible bankruptcy.

The court's action will also likely set in motion a snowball effect as other major airlines move to jettison their pension plans. It may well spill over to other industries as well—including the auto industry where similar rumblings by management about abandoning benefit plans today may be heard—as corporate America accelerates its dismantling of union-negotiated Defined Benefit Pension plans and seeks to replace them with privatized 401(k)-like contribution plans.

United Airlines' abandonment of its pension comes barely a year after Congress passed legislation in April 2004 relieving United and other airlines of \$1.6 billion in pension funding obligations. As United's CEO, Glenn Tilton, happily declared then, "This legislation will help strengthen the pension plans of millions of American workers, including the 62,000 [current, non-management] employees of United Airlines." Tilton took the money and ran, and now, a year later, jettisoned pensions at United nonetheless.

Workers at United will now be left holding the bag and little else. The PBGC's takeover of their pension obligations will mean significant reductions in their benefit payments at retirement since the PBGC will only guarantee \$6.6 billion of United's \$9.8 billion pension liability or about two thirds. The workers will lose the rest. The Labor Dept. estimated that for a 45 year-old whose plan fails this year, the PBGC would cover a maximum of \$11,403 a year upon retirement, even if a larger pension had been earned. Besides the pension cuts, United is also asking the bankruptcy court to override its labor contract obligations and impose a wage cut on its mechanics.

The record-setting, nearly \$10 billion abandonment by United Airlines of its pension liability is only the tip of the pension crisis iceberg, however. Between 1985 and 2002 more than 80,000 Defined Benefit Pension plans have been abandoned by corporations in the U.S., according U.S. Senate hearings on the crisis less than two years ago.

Since 2000 more than 9,000 such plans have been terminated, with the number doubling in 2004 compared to 2003. During the decade of the 1990s the PBGC assumed on average annually pension payment liabilities for an additional 50,000 workers a year. That annual liability for pension benefit payments has increased since 2000 by an average of an additional 175,000 workers a year.

The growing corporate trend toward abandoning traditional pension plans has placed severe stress on the PBGC and its ability to guarantee even reduced pension benefits to workers. Even before the United Airlines announcement, the PBGC experienced the largest financial loss in its history, \$23 billion in 2004. This followed an \$11 billion loss in 2003, plus additional multibillion dollar



Raphael Cornford

losses each year since 2000.

So the PBGC now faces its own funding crisis. It has an immediate liability of \$69 billion in pension benefit payments and assets of only \$39 billion. Should other airlines and other industries follow the United announcement, that crisis will grow worse, much worse—likely requiring a major Congressional bailout of much of the private pension system in the U.S.

But even this is still just a ripple. A pension tsunami is taking shape at sea and currently heading toward the retirement coastline. In an emergency report issued in June 2004, the PBGC estimated that companies with

program."

While George W. Bush concocts a phony financial crisis in Social Security in order to push his plans to privatize that public retirement system, a very real crisis in the traditional Defined Benefit Pension plan system is reaching a climax. And while much attention has been focused in recent months on Bush's plan to radically restructure the Social Security system, a parallel Bush initiative just as significant, though less noticeable, is underway below the public radar on restructuring private pensions as well. Today there are 44 million receiving Social Security retirement benefits. But there are 45 million workers also

\$19 per worker to \$30 per worker per year. For corporations with "below investment grade" pension funds, the PBGC contribution would be even higher than \$30. Some airline executives have responded to that by suggesting that the PBGC take over their pensions now or they will simply refuse to make contributions when the next big payments into the fund are due later this year.

Those inclined toward a Machiavellian view might interpret these proposals as designed to encourage corporations in trouble to abandon their Defined Benefit Plan pensions even faster than before. As Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) asked government representatives testifying before Congress at the time, "It almost looks like you want to put them into bankruptcy and make them terminate those plans."

Should Bush's proposals pass Congress in 2005, certainly companies like US Steel, Lucent, Goodyear, Qwest, R.J. Reynolds—not to mention most of the remaining major airlines—with ratings below investment grade will now seriously consider dumping their pensions onto an already financially stressed PBGC.

Apparently that is just what the Bush administration wants. It would certainly hasten the demise of the traditional Defined Benefit Pension system and more quickly open the way for Bush's preferred "ownership society," replacing group pensions with 401(k)-like individual retirement accounts.

Congress began considering legislation based on these Bush proposals in March 2005. In the next few months decisions will be made on the further restructuring of the private pension system, the import of which is no less consequential than the parallel debate and restructuring simultaneously now also underway with Social Security.

*This article is an excerpt from Jack Rasmus' just released 512 page book, THE WAR AT HOME: THE CORPORATE OFFENSIVE FROM REAGAN TO BUSH, which may be ordered from the website: <http://www.kyklosproductions.com> or see ad on page 10.*

*While much attention has been focused in recent months on Bush's plan to radically restructure the Social Security system, a parallel Bush initiative just as significant, though less noticeable, is underway below the public radar on restructuring private pensions.*

pensions plans under-funded by \$50 million or more—that's more than 1050 pension plans—together had an under-funded liability of \$278.6 billion at the end of 2003. This compares to only \$18.4 billion as recently as 1999. And it doesn't even include the thousands more companies with under-funded liabilities of less than \$50 million.

The aggregate total under-funding of corporate pension plans for which the PBGC is liable as of 2004 amounts to more than \$600 billion. About \$100 billion of that under-funding represents corporations and plans with severe financial problems and thus a very high likelihood of pension plan default and termination in the very near term.

In the words of the PBGC's executive director Bradley Belt, "The current massive under-funding of defined benefit pensions, compounded by the financial struggles of major industries that rely heavily on these pensions, has greatly increased the risk of loss for the pension insurance

dependent on Defined Benefit Pensions with a potential total liability of \$1.5 trillion.

In January of this year the Bush administration proposed that companies with severe pension under-funding problems take up to seven to 10 years to make up contributions to stabilize their funds, instead of just two years as has been the requirement. At hearings before the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee the companies have countered with a proposed extension of 25 years in which to add back funds to bring their pensions back to solvency. The Bush administration also proposed a single corporate bond interest rate to calculate the value of a pension's fund, but with a highly complicated formula that would provide many opportunities for corporations to manipulate and thus avoid accurately estimating their fund's true value. Finally, the Bush administration proposed a sharp increase in corporate contributions to the PBGC, from the previous



# Maritime workers plan future at ITF conference in Rio

by Tom Price

Dockers and seafarers on the International Transport Workers' Federation Fair Practices Committee met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to deal with issues vital to maritime workers. The April 12-15 gathering included transport worker representatives from all corners of the world.

ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne attended as a Dockers' Section committee member. International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams represented the ILWU and West Coast ITF Coordinator Jeff Engels represented U.S. West Coast ITF Inspectors. Peter Lahay, ILWU Local 400 member, attended as ITF Canadian Coordinator. The ILWU is one of 642 transport worker unions in the ITF. It represents 4.5 million workers in 142 countries.

Conference delegates discussed seafarers' rights and the new European Directive, now called Ports Package 2 (PP2), which would privatize the European Union's docks. They also discussed the new International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), the Ports of Convenience campaign and the role of women in the maritime industry.

A **Seafarers' Bill of Rights** is under negotiation within the International Labor Organization. It would combine 63 conventions and recommendations relating to seafarers into one convention that would be enforceable when ratified by individual countries. The conventions include everything from the definitions of vessels and sailors, to standards for hours of work, staffing, shore leave and safety.

"The great thing about the 'super convention' is that it will be enforceable, rather than these flowery mission statements that say 'you should,'" Lahay said. "But now we'll have this added to our tool kit and we will be able to call the Coast Guard down and detain these ships if they don't pay the seafarers."

The agreement should be ready next February. The League of Nations established the ILO in 1919 and the UN took over sponsorship after WWII. Composed of three parties—labor, government and business—the ILO is charged with establishing labor rights standards and getting nations to incorporate them into law.

The Seafarers' Section also announced a campaign to raise minimum monthly pay for AB sailors to \$1550 from \$1400.

The ITF added a number of countries to the Flag of Convenience (FoC) list. The term FoC refers to the practice by steamship companies of registering their ships in countries with few if any labor rights and lax environmental and tax laws. They run up the flag of the country that gives them the best deal, thus a "flag of convenience." The list alerts maritime workers that there may be substandard labor conditions on board the ships coming into port.

France also made the list for allowing ships owned in France to be flagged out, the ITF announced. North Korea and the Republic of Georgia made the list as countries with terrible labor conditions on ships under their flag. Zodiac Marine, a shipping line that had ITF agreements until its owners registered its ships under the British flag last January, made the list. Zodiac's ownership is not in the UK. The real ownership is in Israel.

"Zodiac is under the 'Society of Anonymous Ship Owners,'" Engels said. "They have a ship management office in England, but no British crew. It's a super shell game. The focus of the FoC campaign is to have a genuine link between the owner, the flag and the ship. We want none of this stuff where



From left to right: John Whitlow, Secretary Seafarers Section, Steve Cotton, Secretary, Special Seafarers Dept., Brian Orwell, Chair, Seafarers Section, Paddy Crumlin, (MUA) Vice Chair, Dockers Section, Willie Adams, Secretary-Treasurer ILWU, Frank Leys, new Secretary, Dockers Section.

they have three or four entities in between so when they get sued, they don't have to answer."

**Ports Package 2**, introduced last October by the EU's Transport Commissioner Loyola De Palacio, would revisit the port privatization scheme the European Parliament scuppered 11 months earlier. That followed three years of worker actions that included massive strikes and demonstrations, such as the huge protest in Rotterdam Sept. 29, 2003 attended by ILWU members.

PP2 would ostensibly bring "market forces" to dock labor. What it would do in fact is allow ships' captains to make sailors do longshore work such as cargo handling and lashing. The companies could make the overworked sailors work even harder and displace registered longshore workers. PP2 would also allow stevedoring companies to hire untrained dock workers off the streets.

"The Directive [PP2] would allow the use of 'flying squads' of workers from different countries to work on an ad hoc basis," Dufresne said. "For example, hammer head crane drivers could be brought from Poland to France for the short period of time it takes to unload a ship."

As conference documents pointed out, European ports are already in "fierce competition with each other." The effects of port liberalization would put dockers and sailors into fierce competition against themselves.

"The port industry, with its high growth rate, is one of the most successful and efficient industries in the whole European economy," the documents read. "An important reason for this success is skilled dockers, working under decent social conditions."

The ITF asked delegates to support the campaign against PP2 by signing petitions, available at [www.pp2.org](http://www.pp2.org). European affiliates were asked to send postcards to their member of the European Parliament, and dockers everywhere were asked to support Europe's workers by any other means available to them.

"The seafarers have to understand that if they can get them to encroach on dockers' work then they are helping Ports Package 2," Adams said. "If it happens over there, it will go from being a European Directive to an American directive to a worldwide directive. You'll see more PP2s, more unions with jurisdiction taken away from them."

Last July the **International Ship and Port Facility Security Code** (ISPS) came into force in the maritime world through intergovernmental agreement. Also in July, the ITF Dockers' Section resolved to monitor union-busting schemes imposed under the guise of the ISPS. The code requires each seafaring nation to adopt

security standards for ships and ports.

Thus far, according to the ITF, there have been too few responses to make an assessment of the effects of the code on worker rights. The ITF worked with the International Maritime Organization, the UN agency that drew up the code, and got workers' rights provisions included. But national governments, such as Canada and the U.S., have gone beyond the ISPS and attempted to impose harsh screening procedures on dockers.

Many countries use over-zealous security measures to routinely deny shore leave to seafarers. But thanks to ITF pressure, the IMO issued guidelines at the end of 2004 saying that labor organizations like the ITF should at least have access to the ships and seafarers. But simple shore leave will be denied until international pressure can force a change.

The ITF Dockers' Section meeting called on affiliates to provide information on ISPS implementation and possible violations of worker and human rights. Affiliates are also asked to report on their lobbying efforts. The Dockers' Section could then develop policies it felt necessary to protect worker rights.

The ITF coined the term **Ports of Convenience** (PoC) to echo the Flag of Convenience campaign since it refers to a similar practice—using casual, non-union labor to do the work of a unionized work force and lowering labor standards for the whole industry. If whole ports operated with lax labor standards, then the ship owners could choose the port with the lowest standards and the race to the bottom would be on. With that in mind, the ITF pledged to study the need for a campaign against PoCs at the Dockers' Section Conference in Singapore in July 2004. Since then, the ITF Secretariat has been investigating the need for a campaign for port standards improvement.

A PoC campaign would strive to establish minimum standards for health and safety, and for labor and human rights. It would promote ratification of International Labor Organization conventions, establish union consultation in port issues and respond to the internationalizing effects of Global Network Terminals (GNTs).

GNTs are huge international stevedoring companies (often operated by large steamship companies) like Hutchison Port Holdings, PSA Corp. International, APM-Maersk and P&O Ports. Ultimately, the ITF would like to set up International Framework Agreements with GNTs that established standards of wages, conditions and worker rights.

The ITF requested delegates to comment on GNTs in their own countries, become involved with domestic unions confronting the four GNTs list-

ed above and discuss the possibilities of engaging the GNTs in a global social dialogue. They were also asked to "take forward work on GNTs as part of the Ports of Convenience campaign."

The **ITF Women Seafarers' Committee** reported on its International Women's Day (March 8) campaign and on the planning for a proposed ITF Women's Conference in September 2005. The committee will continue with educational programs and forge closer links with ITF sections, according to its report.

The 40 women delegates in occupations ranging from ship's captain to deckhand discussed the FoC system as a barrier to women's advancement. Without union help, women have had a hard time getting onto ships. The ITF cites figures showing women are three times more likely to be employed in the industry if they have a union. Currently, the ITF has 23,000 women in its seafaring section. However, according to the report, women often feel they don't have a voice in their union.

Access to higher level jobs is severely limited, the report said, and women experience high levels of bullying and harassment.

The ITF commissioned research on gender roles in the Asian-Pacific port industry to better understand women's position in maritime world. Thus far, there have not been enough responses to the 18-question survey to make firm conclusions, except that women are underrepresented in the industry.

When completed, the study could be used to formulate future policies for the Dockers' Section and the Asia-Pacific Regional Committee.

Women's maternity and reproductive health issues remain a major problem, the Women's Section report said. Women also face a lack of career advancement and need for better union representation.

"When I left there I had the feeling that the ITF and the Fair Practices Committee that we were on track, that we were focused, on target to where we need to be as we head to Durban in 2006 for the ITF Congress," Adams said.

Jeff Engels was pleased with the process and results at his second Fair Practices Committee meeting.

"On tough issues the chair made it a priority to get working groups together and they'd come up with compromises that were really magical to watch," Engels said. "They operate on a consensus manner even on the difficult issues. They believe staying together as a group is more important than any single issue, and they don't leave with rancor. The chair and the leadership made sure all parties' voices were heard, even the smallest countries."



# Mining and maritime

Story and photos by Steve Stallone

In a globalized economy the workers who mine, process and transport the resources that feed the world's industries can exercise enormous power. Holding the first links of the global supply chain in their hands and sharing the same multinational employers, they can shape the ways those industries work and distribute the wealth they create. Recent experience has shown just how much the workers along that resource supply chain can help each other in times of need.

More than 200 officers and rank and filers representing more than 30 mining and transportation unions from 10 countries gathered in Long Beach, Calif. May 22-26 to better understand their connections and maximize the strength those offer. Through four days of presentations, debate and networking the delegates made good on the gather-

ing's slogan of "Globalizing Solidarity" and ended the session by unanimously pledging to stand together against global capital and to take the offensive against their multinational employers.

The first Mining and Maritime Conference took place in New Castle, Australia two-and-a-half years ago, convened by the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), the Australian miners union. Australia's economy depends on the extraction and export of resources, bringing the connection between mining and maritime into sharp focus. The MUA and the ILWU co-sponsored this year's meeting, attended by delegates from Chile, Vietnam, Australia, the United States, Canada, South Africa, Japan, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand. ILWU International President James Spinosa set the tone and orientation in his opening remarks.

"We should not just get together when we have a problem, when we are locked out or on strike as companies try to outsource our jobs," Spinosa said. "We should always be ready. We should always be confident we are not alone. We must educate ourselves so we understand where we have to be when the calls come from each other."

Paddy Crumlin, national secretary of the MUA, followed Spinosa and put the issues of globalization and solidarity in the perspective of the assembled unions' experiences.

"We're the people that deliver the goods and that's why we're under the hammer," Crumlin said. "There's no room in free trade for the worker. There's no room in free trade for unions. And there's especially no room in free trade for strong transport unions."

Crumlin went on to recount the story of how in 1998 private police ran 2,000 Australian wharfies off the docks with attack dogs at midnight. Locked out of their jobs, the wharfies watched from outside the gates as scabs did their work. The entire Australian labor movement and ordinary citizens joined them on the picket line. ILWU longshore workers in Los Angeles refused to work the first and last scab-loaded ship calling on the U.S. West Coast, and that solidarity won the workers back their jobs and saved their union.

"As long as we organize ourselves in our workplaces and unions, between our industries," Crumlin concluded, "as long as we are proud to be called the enemies of corruption, elitism and greed, as long as we are proud to be called the enemies of that corporate and state power that is destroying genuine democracy, as long as we do and are proud of these things, we will prevail."

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, a third-generation miner who rose through the ranks of the United Mine Workers of America to become the number-two leader in the American labor movement, welcomed the international delegates to the U.S. "where justice and prosperity are *always* just around the corner for working people."

Trumka told the delegates they need to "connect the dots" between the widening gap between workers' wages, the obscenely high pay of corporate executives and the people determining policy and law.

"The cold reality for workers and our unions in the United States is that corporations and their executives are picking our pockets with one hand and controlling our government with the other," he said.

He went on to name the investment companies and CEOs who are funding the effort to privatize Social Security and steal American workers' retirement for their own gain. He suggested ways to deny these "corporate conspirators" their victory—better organizing, better political action, better legal and regulatory strategies, more coalitions for workers', civil and human rights and, most importantly, better solidarity.

"Working together we can discover new ways of winning, all of us together," he concluded. "Workers and leaders from many different unions, from many different countries, with many different cultures, but one set of values, building one movement, speaking one powerful, one undeniable voice, demanding a better place not for some, not for a few, not for just the rich, but for all of us, working together struggling together, standing together, fighting together and winning together in solidarity."

With that the delegates started their real work of sharing information about their situations and searching for ways they could better them together. First the mining unions laid out their current situation. John Maitland, the national secretary of the CFMEU, noted that the connections between mining and maritime are not intuitively obvious. But in a globalized industrial economy the workers who mine, process and deliver the resources create the wealth of society and deserve a bigger share of it and are in a position to make that happen, he said.

Gino Govender, of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), which includes 144 mining affiliate unions from 85 countries, presented an overview of the global mining industry, exhorting the delegates to "know your enemy." He said the industry is experiencing a boom right now, and the biggest mining companies are flush with cash and are merging into larger conglomerates. These circumstances make this a good time for workers to take action to end the huge gap in wealth between the people who own the mines and those who live in the mining countries.

Frank Leys, the new secretary of the dockers section of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), noted that four major terminal operators—A.P. Moeller, Hutchison, P&O and PSA International—now handle more than half of all global trade at their facilities around the world. The ITF is trying to work with union affiliates at their terminals to develop and negotiate framework agreements, contracts with minimum international standards that take into consideration the basic conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

This echoes the ITF's 50-year Flag of Convenience (FOC) campaign. Ship owners sail their vessels under the flags of countries with lax if any labor regulations or tax laws. Seafarers aboard these ships, usually from poor developing countries, often work under abysmal conditions. The ITF tries to get the ship owners to sign contracts guaranteeing minimum pay and conditions, including a clause prohibiting the sailors from doing dockers' cargo-handling work. In mutual solidarity the dockers help the seafarers enforce those contracts when they come to the ports. But, Leys pointed out, some ships' captains are using the new international security regulations to keep dock workers off the ships and make seafarers do cargo handling.



ITF Dockers Section Secretary Frank Leys.



CFMEU National Secretary John Maitland.



The ICEM's Gino Govender.



IBU National Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast (left) and the MUA's Lorraine Ryan present the Women's Committee report to the full body.



# unions plan solidarity

Leys also mentioned another new solidarity collaboration between the ITF and the ICEM—a global alliance of oil and gas production and transportation workers. Much like the mining and maritime alliance, this initiative aims to follow oil from the point of production through to the final point of distribution figuring that often the workers best placed to assist a group of oil transport workers may not be other transport workers, but those involved in oil production.

Bob Hayden, national secretary of Australia's Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU), spoke of how his members are a key link between mining and maritime, carrying the resources from "pit to port." During the big 1997 miners dispute in Australia with the notoriously anti-union company Rio Tinto, the rail workers of the RTBU ran no trains from the mines to the docks, providing crucial support for the miners' eventual victory. Similarly, during the Australian waterfront dispute in 1998, RTBU members made sure not one freight train made it to the ports. Hayden said his union is now working with other transportation unions in Australia to map out the strengths and weaknesses of their mutual employers and to work on joint organizing, member education, lobbying and corporate campaigning.

## WORKSHOPS

On the second day of the gathering the delegates broke into four smaller workshops—on maritime, mining, women's issues and pensioners—for more detailed discussions.

The maritime workshop focused mostly on issues of port security and how new security measures are being used to bust maritime unions. After 9-11 the United Nations' International Maritime Organization (IMO) developed the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) allegedly to protect maritime trade from terrorist attacks. Its implementation has varied country to country as national unions have, with different degrees of success, worked with or against their governments to protect workers' rights.

Dean Summers, the ITF Coordinator in Australia, explained how the MUA beat back the most onerous aspects of the security code. The Australian transportation worker identification card will include none of the "smart" electronic information features employers and government officials wanted. Instead it will just be a simple plastic photo ID card. And the criminal background checks will only search for convictions on crimes related to terrorism.

By contrast Canadian maritime unions are fighting draconian measures currently proposed for Canada's waterfront, said ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne. These proposals include extensive and intrusive background checks that require only a rather subjective finding of "reasonable suspicion" to deny even longtime longshore workers access to the ports and their jobs.

"It's a complete invasion of our members' privacy," Dufresne said. "And it's one more step on the path to a police state."

Dufresne said the unions are working together to develop a program that employers and elected officials can support that will demand changes to define the criteria and rationales for screening decisions and create an independent and transparent appeals process. He added that Canadian and

American unions are asking the ITF to file a formal complaint with the International Labor Organization (ILO) on their governments' abuse of the ISPS code.

Mike Mitre, the ILWU's director of port security, told the workshop that in the U.S. real port security is being ignored in favor of measures like the Transport Workers Identification Credential (TWIC) card to control the workforce and hamstringing unions. Still, the criminal background checks are the worst part of the new security measures for ILWU longshore workers, but the union has been working in Congress to lessen the impact. Mitre said with employers now worrying that these policies may negatively affect their trained and productive workforce, and with the Bush administration wanting to fast-track the TWIC card, the union may get the narrower background checks and the appeal process it has been lobbying for all along.

During the maritime workshop Vo Van Nhat, the deputy director of Vietnam General Confederation of Labor's (VGCL) International Dept., presented a report on the state of unions in his country. Vietnam adopted an "open door" economic policy 15 years ago, allowing foreign investment to develop the economy. In 1995 it adopted a Labor Code defining the rights, obligations and responsibilities of employers and workers and laying out procedures for handling labor disputes, grievances and sanctions. Vietnam has also ratified 16 ILO Conventions.

The VGCL, the umbrella organization for Vietnamese unions, currently comprises 20 industrial unions and has 4.5 million members. The unions support the government's bid to join the WTO, but understand that globalization brings both opportunities and challenges for Vietnamese workers. To deal with the possible negative impacts, the unions know they need to ally with other worker groups nationally and internationally, Nhat said.

The miners' workshop discussed mobilizing a global solidarity action across the resource chain involving miners and maritime workers. They agreed to identify a campaign target—a high-profile company—and set goals that revolve around clear demands for the right to organize and to bargain, and for worker health and safety. The campaign should include a mass grassroots education plan on the current practices of corporate greed and link workers in the global production and supply chain in an international day of action.

The women's workshop, including women union activists from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S., was meant to build on the women's accomplishments at the First Mining and Maritime conference. Then the women's caucus got the conference to pass a resolution pledging to increase women's future participation in ongoing conferences to 10 percent and to enact training and mentoring programs for women.

Terri Mast, national secretary-treasurer of the Inlandboatmen's Union, the ILWU's Marine Division, and the ILWU's representative on the ITF's Women's Committee, reported on that ITF committee's work. Established in 1994, the ITF's Women's Committee has already made progress in raising, defining and studying women's issues within the transportation industry, and in developing programs to deal with them.

Lorraine Ryan from the MUA reported how her



Sharan Burrow, ACTU President

union had established a women's committee three years ago, setting up a national email message network and regular conference calls to deal with gender issues facing them. Now they are encouraging women in New Zealand and the U.S. to do the same in their unions.

The committee passed a resolution asking the conference to go on the record supporting forums in every union for women to discuss issues of concern.

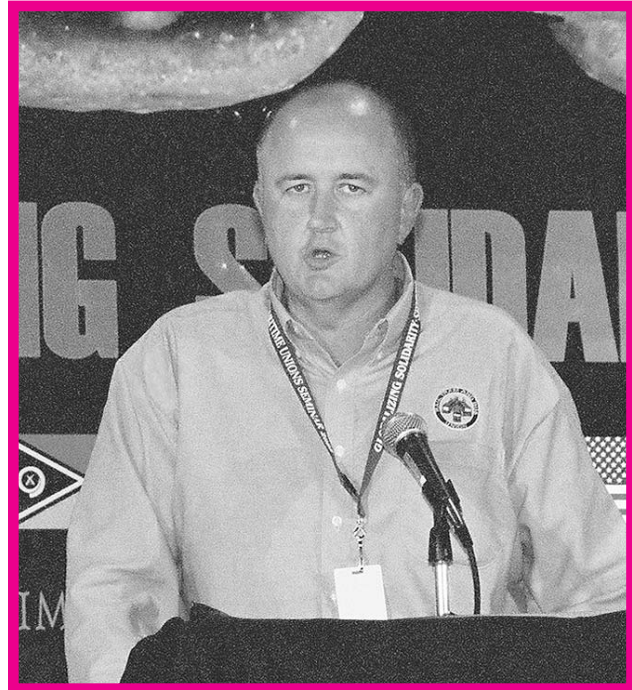
The MUA veterans and the ILWU pensioners, along with some active members of the Maritime Union of New Zealand who are moving to establish their own pensioners group, discussed the role of retired members as keepers of the history and traditions of their unions and providers of support and guidance for their active members. They resolved to help establish retiree groups in unions all over the world and encourage veteran and pension worldwide solidarity. They also sought and received the gathering's vow to be included in all future international conferences.

## CRISES AND SOLIDARITY AROUND THE WORLD

### Burma

The immediacy of the workers' struggle intruded on the conference's proceedings when the ITF's Frank Leys got a call from the London headquarters in the middle of Tuesday's session informing him of the assassination of Seafarers' Union of Burma organizer Ko Moe Naung. The Burmese army had arrested him a few days earlier, tortured him and finally killed him in retaliation for his work organizing Burmese fishermen and migrant workers. The ITF called for the international trade union movement and the international business community to isolate Burma and its military regime both politically and commercially. The delegates voted to ded-

*continued on page 8*

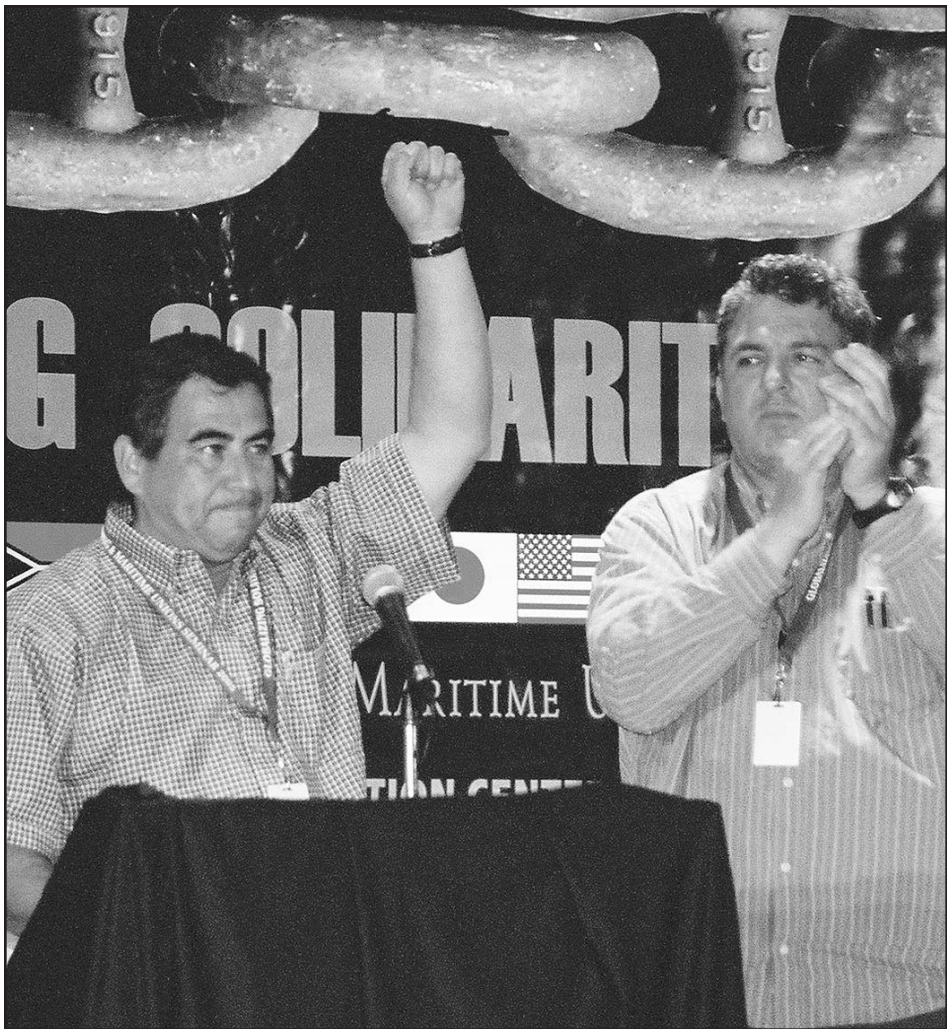


Bob Hayden, National Secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union of Australia



Delegates at the Mining and Maritime seminar.





Chilean dockworkers union leader Jorge Silva Beron and ILWU Director of International Affairs Ray Familathe.

MINING AND MARITIME SOLIDARITY

continued from page 7

icate the seminar to Naung’s memory.

Chile

The president of the 6,000-member Chilean dock workers’ union, Jorge Silva Beron, recounted how his members went on strike Oct. 5, 2004 demanding a raise from \$29 a day to \$32. They were met by police and military who attacked the workers and him specifically, beating him exclusively on the head and then leaving him to almost bleed to death.

After 20 days on strike the Chilean dockers finally won their demands. But now the employers are suing the union for the money lost in those 20 days and the government is prosecuting Beron for leading an organization that stopped production at the port. He is facing a five-year prison sentence and his case will not be decided by a judge, but by a navy admiral.

Understanding the desperation of the situation, the delegates raised \$6,000 from among themselves to donate to Beron’s legal defense fund.

Australia

Sharan Burrow, the president of the Australian Confederation of Trade Unions, and all the Australian unionists present sounded the alarm on the new crisis awaiting them upon their return home. Prime Minister John Howard’s ultra-conservative “Liberal” Party won majorities in both houses of the Parliament in recent elections. Howard declared that when the new government takes office in July, it would use its power to “reform” the country’s labor laws in what the CFMEU’s John Maitland called “the greatest attack on workers rights since our country was born.”

Employers will be legally able to offer workers “individual contracts” rather than bargaining collectively with them. Combined with the elimination of the country’s unfair dismissal laws, the choice workers will face is clear and stark: Accept the bosses’ terms or be sacked. Howard also plans to lower the minimum wage and eliminate the right to refuse overtime or irregular hours.

The delegates passed a resolution opposing Howard’s plans and supporting the Australian unions, pledging each union present to do all it can to help beat back this attack. ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne said

he would take the resolution to the upcoming Canadian Labor Congress’ meeting to get the support of the entire Canadian labor movement.

Blue Diamond almonds

In a presentation on organizing along the marine cargo-handling chain, Peter Olney, the ILWU’s director of organizing, pointed to one of the union’s latest organizing drives—the Blue Diamond almond processing plant in Northern California—as an example of using the power of the ports for workers. Almonds are the largest agricultural export in the state and Blue Diamond is the largest processor, with 70 percent of its product exported around the world. The company began an aggressive anti-union campaign as soon as its more than 600 workers started organizing for better pay, conditions and health care.

All the unions at the gathering signed a letter to the CEO of Blue Diamond encouraging him to respect his workers’ right to organize and to deal with their demands. They informed him they would all continue to “monitor this situation and receive regular updates from the ILWU. If your negative conduct continues then we will do anything within our rights and legal power to assist the ILWU in bringing justice to the Blue Diamond workers.”

At the end of the meetings the delegates crafted, refined and voted unanimously for a resolution committing the participating unions to develop a communications network of union leaders and rank-and-file activists able to provide a global rapid response to political or industrial conflicts affecting any one of them and to identify an appropriate corporate target to be the focus of a recognition campaign. (see sidebar: “The Long Beach Declaration” on this page.)

*Throughout the week the ILWU Host Committee, comprised of rank and filers from the Southern California locals 13, 63 and 94 made the guests feel welcome. From picking up visitors from the airport and returning them at the end of the event, to putting on dinners and parties several evenings, to a host of daily outings, the Committee, led by its chair Local 13’s Sunshine Campbell, provided the utmost in hospitality and did the union proud.*

The Long Beach Declaration  
May 26, 2005

We, trade union leaders and members representing more than 3 million workers in the mining, maritime, manufacturing, transport, energy and construction industries from the USA, Canada, Chile, South Africa, Japan, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Vietnam and Australia;

Having gathered in Long Beach, California from 22nd to 26th May 2005 to consider the commitments we pledged in the Newcastle Declaration of September 2002; and

Having deliberated on the impact of international capital’s globalization offensive on our unions, our members, our families and our societies; and

Recalling our recent experience of the most vicious attacks on our members in the Patrick’s dispute on the Australian waterfront, the global campaign for justice in Rio Tinto and the attack on the U.S. longshore workers in 2002, we hereby place on record our determination to defend our collective futures.

We are mindful of the fact that workers’ rights and security are deteriorating at a rapid pace. Violence and intimidation against workers and their trade unions continue. Colombia remains a killing field for trade union activists. The recent attack against Jorge Silva Beron of the Chilean dockworkers and the arrest and murder of Ko Moe Nuang from Burma bear testimony to the need for a global response to the brutality against workers. We have condemned and will continue to condemn these brutal actions against our fellow brothers and sisters every time they occur.

We note that the globalization of capital is creating a race to the bottom for all workers across the globe.

We are witnessing the consolidation and increased power of ownership and control of corporations in the resources, commodities and transportation sectors. They are doing this through an aggressive campaign of mergers and acquisitions. In the process, quality jobs won by us over decades of struggle are being destroyed in one country by anti-union offensives and work transferred to low-wage countries in a “race to the bottom.”

In an attempt to attract investment, many governments are colluding with bosses to deregulate the labor market through bilateral trade negotiations and regional free trade agreements.

In the global production and supply chain, China has emerged as a global economic power. In opening up its huge labor market to foreign multinationals, China has emerged as the world’s largest producer of cheap consumer goods. Multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Wal-Mart are exploiting the pool of cheap labour and causing massive job losses in the countries of their traditional areas of production and supply, leaving only low-paid, non-union jobs with no benefits.

The influence of the Wal-Mart corporate culture is being felt in all forms of bargaining. The working people of China and other developing economies are our natural allies and we will spare no effort in building cross-border solidarity with them.

We will continue to demand that all trade agreements contain a social clause that among others, respects fundamental workers’ rights to organize and bargain collectively.

The consolidation and domination of global logistics and transport industries by large transnational companies is an obstacle to fair trade rules and social justice for workers and their families.

Workers in the mining, maritime, manufacturing, transport, energy and construction industries have a proud tradition of mobilizing for unity and struggle both locally and globally. The industries in which our members work are essential to international trade and the economic development and wealth it creates.

We condemn the monopolistic and exploitative practices of these MNCs and will spare no effort in building alliances in solidarity with workers in all countries to defend our rights, to challenge their dominance and to realize decent labor conditions.

Citizens are becoming increasingly aware and resentful of corporate greed and excess because of the negative impact it has on their daily lives. Multi-million dollar executive salaries are offensive when workers’ wages, health benefits and pensions are being eroded and grinding poverty is increasingly pervasive in our global community.

The transport chain has emerged as the industry that is vital to all nations’ economic interests. Therefore our actions can have a significant impact on the increasing attack on workers and unions in the national and international transport sectors. As delegates gathered here in Long Beach, we pledge that we will not allow this offensive to degrade and diminish the rights of our brothers and sisters in those industries.

Workers’ interests are increasingly undermined by commercial media that pursues a pro-corporate agenda. Our unions need to urgently embark on mass education programs that assist workers to counter this offensive. We recognize that without this mobilization we will not be able to properly realize an effective response to this systematic abuse and undermining of our rights.

We stand behind our slogan of “An Injury to one, is an Injury to all.” THE WORKERS UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED. This conference particularly identifies the need to mobilize all our members to participate and act in support of their union campaigns.

Having participated in the many debates and discussions about our struggles, and having received and endorsed reports from the veterans and pensioners, the women’s and the maritime and mining workshops, delegates to this Second International Pacific Rim Mining and Maritime Seminar commit themselves to the following course of action to build our capacity to organize an effective global response.

We will:  
Develop a communication network of leaders and rank-and-file activists that will be able to provide a global rapid response to any immediate need arising from political or industrial conflict;

Establish a leadership team to discuss and assist in co-ordinating the implementation of the decisions of this seminar;

Co-operate in the development of education programs for the rank and file to understand the importance of international solidarity for all workers;

Increase the involvement of women in campaigns and community actions;  
Increase the involvement of retirees in campaigns and community actions;  
Increase the involvement of youth in campaigns and community actions;  
Build capacity and power to enable us to engage in global campaigns against MNCs for union recognition;

Identify the appropriate MNC and the appropriate commercial interests in the transport chain to be the targets of our recognition campaigns. WE WILL TAME THEM OR SHAME THEM;

Identify a day when global activities can take place that unite all our members and their communities from east to west;

Develop national and regional organizing networks to promote and develop the determinations of this meeting;

Work with national trade union centers, global union federations and the ICFTU to build support for the decisions of this seminar; and

Convene a further meeting in 2007 to review, consolidate and build on the aims of this meeting.

We dedicate this gathering to Brother Ko Moe Nuang in memory of his dedication and contribution to the ideals we all stand for and strive for. We call on all participants to register their protests will the Burmese Consulate or Embassy in their country as a matter of urgency.



# GETTING ORGANIZED

## OXBOW WORKERS WIN A REAL UNION

Early on in their organizing drive, the workers from Oxbow Carbon and Mineral held their meetings at a Mexican restaurant near where Carson meets Long Beach. The evening shift came before work. The larger day shift group came after work. They took over the restaurant's narrow closed-in patio, sprawling in the booths or lounging against the wall.

At one meeting, when the company was ratcheting up its anti-union campaign, they took a few minutes out to talk about why they had launched their drive. Jaime Salazar pulled out his wallet and opened it to show one lonely dollar bill. Miguel Lara talked about family.

"You've got to fight for your kids," Lara said. ILWU Local 13A Business Agent John Regas, sitting in with the Oxbow guys, reminded them of how important it was to have a contract that let them enforce safety rules.

"It's a matter of life and death," Regas said. But more than anything else, the Oxbow workers decided, they needed respect and real representation.

For the last nine years the 58 Oxbow workers had been "represented" by the International Union of Public and Industrial Workers (IUPIW), a non-AFL-CIO union known for making sweetheart deals. With their IUPIW contract set to expire March 31, they decided to try to change unions. They succeeded, voting to join ILWU 13-A and then using direct action to squash Oxbow's post-vote move to intimidate them, starting negotiations for a first contract on a strong footing.

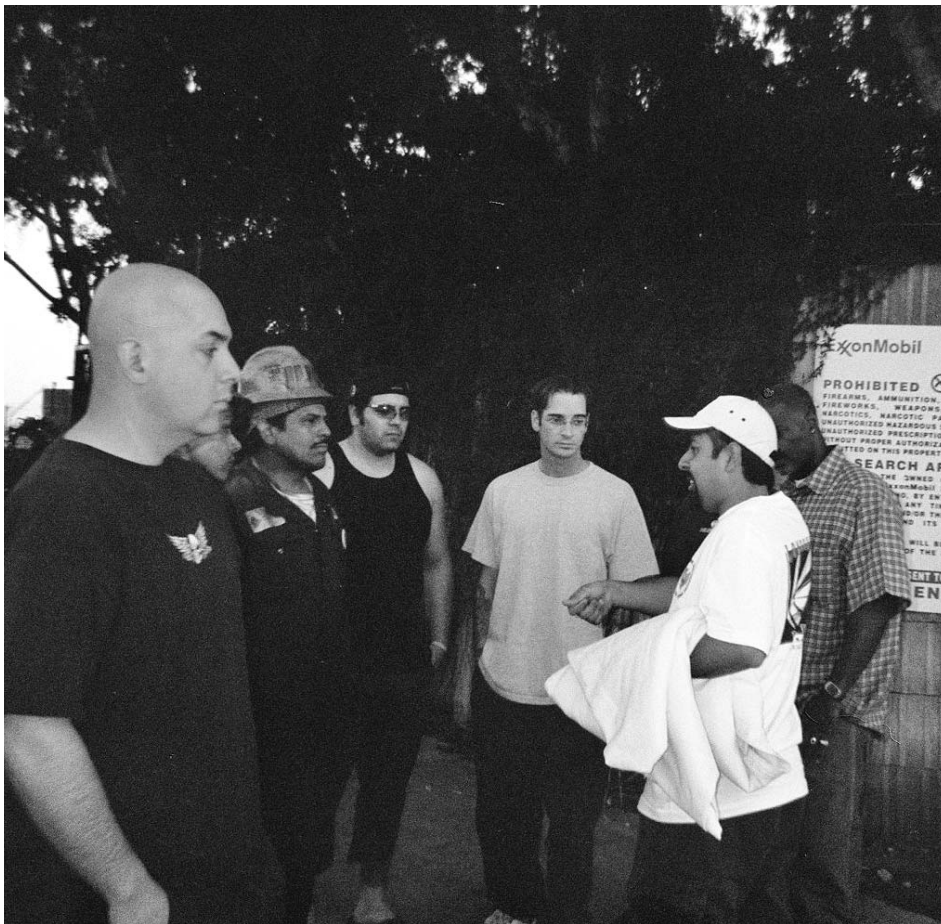
Like the members of 13-A who work at LAXT, Oxbow workers store and transport petroleum coke, a byproduct of oil refining used to make steel and to heat homes in countries with lax air pollution laws. Some work at the Mobil refinery in Torrance, some at the Shell refinery and "barn" in Carson and some work side by side with the longshore Local 13 members who load the ships at Pier G in the Port of Long Beach. They are mechanics and laborers and heavy equipment operators, all doing heavy, dirty work in 12-hour shifts with four days on, four days off.

In the years they worked under IUPIW, they never felt they really had a union. Carl Cendejas served as president of the local for a while.

"I helped a few, but most people who got terminated I couldn't help, because I had nothing in the contract to go by," Cendejas said. "We'd say 'Here today, could be gone tomorrow.' Everything seemed it was written so management would have the last laugh."

When it came time to negotiate, IUPIW would make a proposal without talking with its members, Cendejas said. He and a few of the other officers started meeting. They knew the end of their contract would give them an opening to switch unions. Under labor law, an active contract protects the union from decertification, but members have a 30-day window before the contract expires in which they can vote to decertify or change representatives.

Last November, two Oxbow workers first talked to International Organizer Carlos Cordon. By the new year, they were getting their co-workers to sign union cards and a letter demanding that management respect their rights under the National Labor Relations Act. The ILWU organizers took the letter with 57 signatures to management, took 57 cards to the NLRB and filed for an election Jan. 3.



(Left to right) Ben Cuevas, Juan Villegas (hidden), Jaime Salazar, Chuy Guzmán, Tom Fitzgibbons and Brian Williams check in with Carlos Cordon at the Mobil gate before unfurling a large ILWU banner, which they held high so passing traffic could see it.

Management started hauling the workers into meetings. They sat stone-silent. Management spread the rumor that PACE, which represents other workers at the Shell and Mobil refineries, did not want the ILWU in the house. PACE Local 8-675 President Dave Campbell, Organizer Mario Giron and Executive Board Delegate Cesar Tiscareno came to an Oxbow organizing committee meeting and pledged their full support. Tiscareno turned out to be a cousin of one of the guys from Oxbow. At the next captive audience meeting, the Oxbow guys baffled management by showing up wearing PACE buttons alongside their ILWU pins.

The IUPIW threatened they could lose their seniority, their jobs and their insurance by voting for the ILWU. (They were getting their health insurance through the IUPIW trust.) Local 13 sent a letter of support and the Southern California District Council delivered letters from several public officials, including California Assembly member Betty Karnette and six of the nine Long Beach City Council members: Tonia Reyes Uranga, Laura Richardson, Bonnie Lowenthal, Dan Baker, Patrick O'Donnell and Rae Gabelich.

The NLRB election ballot Feb. 10-11 gave the Oxbow workers a choice between the IUPIW, the ILWU and no union. They opted for the ILWU by a vote of 46 to 12.

The IUPIW cancelled the workers' health insurance as of March 31. The ILWU contended Oxbow needed to provide coverage of some sort. If it didn't, the company would be making a unilateral change to their terms and conditions of employment, which would be illegal under labor law.

The company offered to furnish insurance on several conditions. They wanted to take health and retirement benefits off the table in the upcoming negotiations, make workers responsible for any increases in insurance costs, and give up the present retirement plan.

"There was \$1.4 million in the pot and they asked us to just give it away," Jose Villegas said. The ILWU filed an unfair labor practice charge—and the Oxbow workers threw up an informational picket line at Pier G April 1.

Two-thirds of the new members walked out. Members from Locals 13,

13A, walking bosses' Local 94 and the IBU swelled the line to some 50 participants. Though there was no ship in port, they made their point. Management called the ILWU a couple of weeks later and agreed to put the new members on the company's insurance plan right away and put health care on the table during bargaining.

The group has had several meetings to set priorities and develop contract language. Carl Cendejas, Chuy Guzmán, Alex Galvan, Javier Chavez and Jose Villegas make up the bargaining team, with Local 13 Coast Labor Relations Committee member Ole Olsen acting as their chief negotiator.

"Our two top priorities are our wages and benefits," Guzmán said. Oxbow has hired the well-known management-side firm of Seyfarth-Shaw to represent its interests at the table. The two sides have yet to exchange proposals. Still, Galvan said, they have come a long way already.

"We didn't even know each other before," Galvan said. "Now we're united. We stand for each other."

—Marcy Rein

## NO FUELING: WE WANT THE UNION!

Once they decided to organize, the production and maintenance workers at McCall Oil and Chemical in Portland acted as one till they got the job done. All 11 "marched on the boss" Jan. 3 to deliver signed union cards and an official demand that McCall recognize the Inlandboatmen's Union as their representative.

That did not persuade McCall CEO Jim Charriere.

"Your union has made a claim to represent the majority of our employees," Charriere responded by letter. "We have a good faith doubt as to the accuracy of that claim." The company demanded an NLRB-supervised election.

Two months later, unfazed by the company's anti-union campaign, all 11 workers declared their intention to vote for the IBU in a signed letter published on the Portland Jobs with Justice (JwJ) Web site. They followed through with a unanimous "yes" vote in the March 8 election.

"We needed to be a union," said Charlie Finger, now a member of the bargaining team.

The McCall workers handle ship

fuel, diesel and asphalt, working 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They fuel barges and tugboats—many worked by other IBU members—with a set-up rather like a large gas station on the dock. They unload hot asphalt from rail cars, mix it to customers' specifications, then load it in trucks.

"The work takes knowledge and experience," Finger said, and it can be hazardous.

The McCall crews work around boilers, steam, oil heated to 500°F under pressure, asphalt at 350°F. If trucks have any water left inside when they're loaded, the hot asphalt can turn it to steam and blow their tops off. If hot asphalt gets on the skin, it can't be pulled off right away. The workers deal with normal industrial workplace hazards like tripping and heavy lifting, and at times have to climb 40-foot storage tanks without harnesses.

"All this stuff adds up, but safety procedures have been tossed to the side," said bargaining team member Vicky Wintheiser. "Our safety program has dwindled down to showing videos, to the minimum they have to do to cover their butts with OSHA."

Though safety issues helped move the organizing, the biggest push came from the terminal manager, proving once again that the best organizer is a bad boss. Finger called him "tyrannical, arbitrary, capricious, argumentative, combative and non-professional."

"He'd come in every morning not with a 'hi' or a 'hello' but a rant or a tantrum," Wintheiser said. "This didn't get done right, didn't get done his way. He'd yell at us in front of customers."

"People got sick of having to deal with that. People on night shift would be having a good shift and then a half-hour before he came in they'd be getting stomachaches, anxiety attacks," she said.

After the workers declared their intentions to unionize, the company re-instated safety meetings and started up the safety program again. It handed out raises all round and reprimanded the problem manager. It also did its best to scare people about union dues, fines and strikes.

"They saw through that," IBU Patrolman Mike Conradi said. The IBU worked closely with the McCall group from the beginning.

"We gave the McCall's folks an open invitation to our regular meetings and held special meetings for them," Conradi said. "Meeting with the IBU straight off confirmed the idea they could gain a voice at the workplace."

Portland JwJ backed them up as well, coming with them when they marched on Charriere's office and giving them space on the JwJ Web site for regular updates.

The McCall workers elected their bargaining team in late January. It includes Brad Purkapile and Curt Francis as alternates, along with Finger and Wintheiser.

The group began setting contract goals long before the election and drafted a complete proposal themselves, working from a sample agreement. They put top priority on developing a grievance procedure and work rules. They also want to establish more regular schedules and more equal pay rates.

The IBU already represents one of the two other oil storage/fueling companies on the Columbia River, Pacific Terminals. "We're trying to tie them in as close as we can," said Conradi.

To date McCalls and the workers have had three negotiating sessions, with another one scheduled.

—Marcy Rein



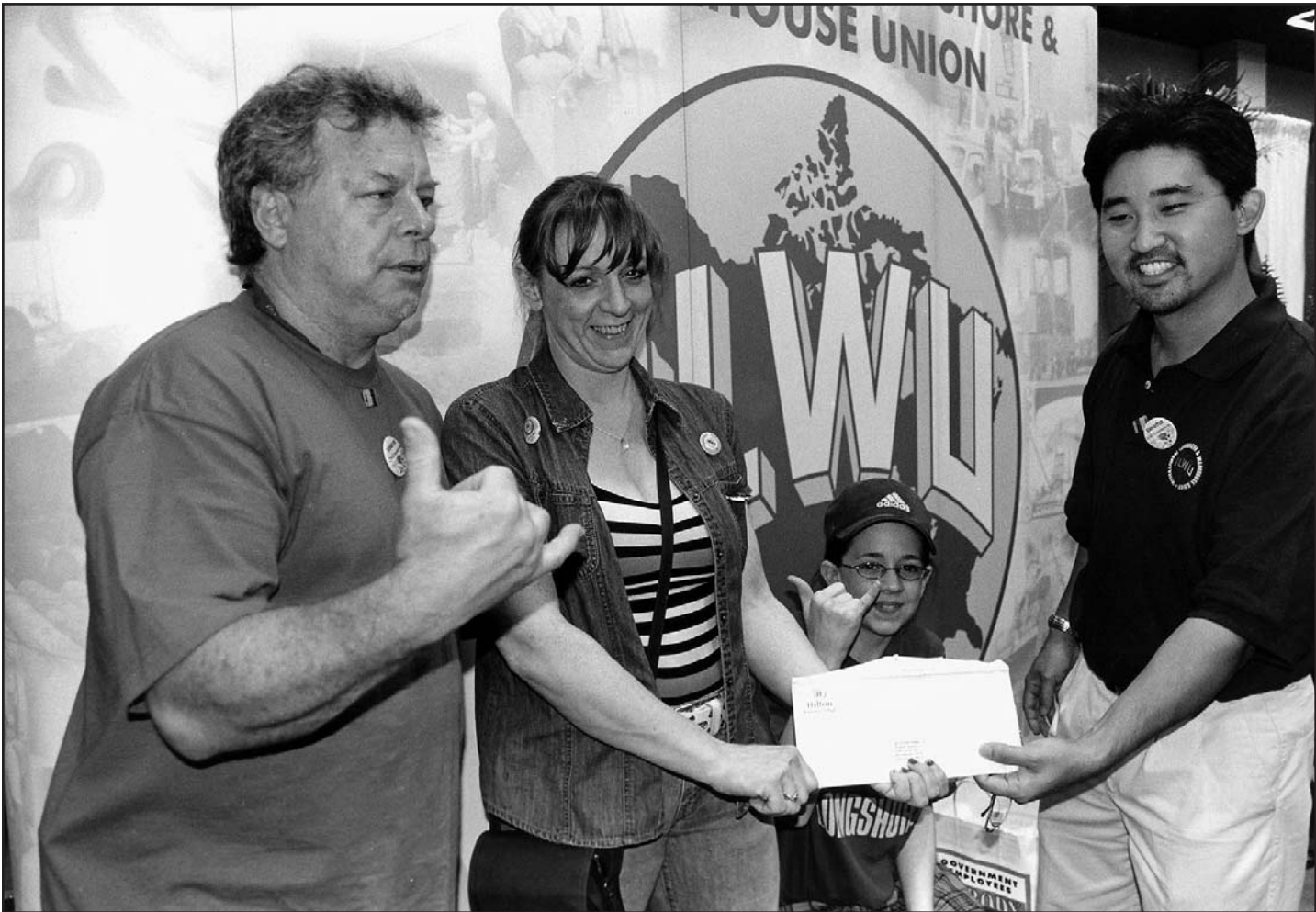
# ILWU a big hit at union trade show

The ILWU joined scores of other unions and locals at the 2005 AFL-CIO Union Industries Show in Portland, Ore. April 29-May 2.

“This show has traveled throughout the country these past 60 years to underscore the importance of supporting good union jobs, purchasing union goods and services and keeping union jobs in American communities,” said Charles Mercer, president of the AFL-CIO Union Label and Service Trades Department.

More than 200,000 visitors viewed some 300 exhibits and live demonstrations at the Oregon Convention Center starring many of the best known local and national union companies. They took home nearly a million dollars worth of consumer goods, groceries and prizes, including UAW-made autos from GM (2005 Chevy Cobalt) and Ford (2005 2X4 Focus), a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, vacations, hospitality from Portland’s Benson Hotel, appliances made by members of the UAW, IUE-CWA, PACE members (recently merged with the Steel Workers) and a John Deere Tractor made by Machinists and USW-PACE members. Giveaways included dry goods, USW-PACE paper products, canned goods, and snacks courtesy of Teamsters Dairy Division workers and groceries courtesy of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM).

ILWU members from locals all along the Columbia River, as well as from Southern California and Hawaii, staffed the union’s new exhibit booth featuring images of workers in the multitude of occupations the ILWU represents. The longshore locals gave away t-shirts and ILWU videos and booklets. Local 5 raffled off \$1,000 worth of gift certificates donated by



ILWU Hawaii Local 142 International Executive Board member Martin Jensen (left) and International Representative from Hawaii Mat Yamamoto (right) present one of the raffled hotel packages to winner Debbie Rigdon and her daughter.

Powell’s Books. Hawaii Local 142 members gave out pineapples, sugar, coffee and macadamia nuts, and raffled off nine Hawaii hotel packages. They were the hit of the booth.

“No one ever thought of the ILWU as hotel workers or pineapple and sugar workers,” said Local 8’s Jeff Smith, lead organizer of the union’s efforts at the show. “Our

Hawaii folks should have received a trophy for the giveaways they brought and the work they did.”

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski, a former steel worker, truck driver and labor lawyer, cut the ribbon formally opening the show. The Oregon Democrat praised the labor movement’s contributions to American culture and society.

“The American quality of life is because of the American labor movement,” Kulongoski said, urging working families to “take pride in what you see here. No country in the world can compete with us if we recognize the efforts of America’s working people.”

—Dispatcher staff reports

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## 2005 LaborFest

### 12th Annual

**International Working Class Film & Video Festival:** July 5, 8, 22,  
**Latin American Working Class Film & Video Fest:** July 6, 7, 13, 20, 21, 27, 28, 30  
**Labor Maritime History Boat Tour:** July 17 (Special focus on women on the waterfront)

**LaborFest 2005 Full Schedule:** [www.laborfest.org](http://www.laborfest.org)  
**(415) 642-8066, E-mail:** [laborfest@laborfest.net](mailto:laborfest@laborfest.net)

## Labor History Tour by bicycle

SAT. JULY 30, 12 NOON

\$15-50 sliding scale to benefit CounterPULSE (*notaflof*)

Local historian Chris Carlsson will conduct a bicycling Labor History tour on Saturday, July 30. Learn about early 8-hour day movement, the ebb and flow of class struggle that shaped San Francisco in the 19th century, a detailed look at the famous 1934 strike, what led to it, and what it led to, the rise of the ILWU, its storied history and crucial role in the political and economic life of San Francisco, and its surprising role at the fulcrum of globalization. Finally, Carlsson’s own history of co-publishing the infamous underground financial district magazine *Processed World* will add an awareness of contemporary labor realities seldom heard among the club of labor historians...

**Meet at 12 noon at CounterPULSE, 1310 Mission Street at 9th.**  
**Reservations required: call 626.2060. [www.counterpulse.org](http://www.counterpulse.org)**





# PEOPLE

## Professor David Olson honored at his retirement



Professor David Olson, who recently announced his retirement from the political science department of the University of Washington, played a key role in the establishment of the Harry Bridges Chair in Labor Studies at the University of Washington.

Northwest Coast Committeeman Joe Wenzl (right) presented a plaque from the ILWU Officers in gratitude for all that Professor David J. Olson (left) has done and continues to do for the labor movement. Olson, the inaugural holder of the Harry Bridges Chair and Director of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, University of Washington, was honored—and roasted—on the evening of May 24, 2005.

Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire designated the date “David J. Olson Day.” The University of Washington’s Department of Political Science, the ILWU, the Port of Seattle and other friends hosted a dinner at the Bell Harbor Conference Center to mark Olson’s retirement after 31 years at the University of Washington, Seattle.

“The ILWU is grateful for David’s recognition of the contributions of working families and their unions in the progressive advancement of all people,” Wenzl said at the gathering. “Professor Olson’s students learned that the career you may achieve with your education is secondary to the contribution you personally make to the society in which we all live.”

Former and current students, staff, colleagues, and comrades spoke (and, in one case, sang) about Professor Olson’s immeasurable contributions to the university and the wider community. Many mentioned the foundation of the Bridges Chair as one of the most significant achievements of his illustrious career.

At the critical moment in 1992 when working people were raising the million dollars to establish the chair, fear overcame University department chairmen and the development officer. Bridges Chair organizers were told that taking the money of working people would dry up the well of business endowed chairs and hefty corporate research grants. Olson wrote, and delivered personally, a stirring letter to University President William Gerberding asking for fair play in academia. Gerberding responded by donating \$1,000 himself to the Bridges Chair. He also took with him into the development office the \$500 donation of Gus Hall, former National Chair of the Communist Party USA.

Olson went on to become the first holder of the Harry Bridges Chair. He laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and professors help students develop an understanding of labor unions. He

proudly accepted honorary membership in ILWU Local 19. Olson’s last memorial is in the lobby of Suzzallo Library. His name appears on the plaque with 1,000 other names of working people who gave money to found the Harry Bridges Chair. Just a few steps away Harry Bridges delivered a speech in 1936 to the students of the University of Washington. Bridges told the students all that labor wanted was a “fair shake.” Thanks to Olson, Harry got his wish.

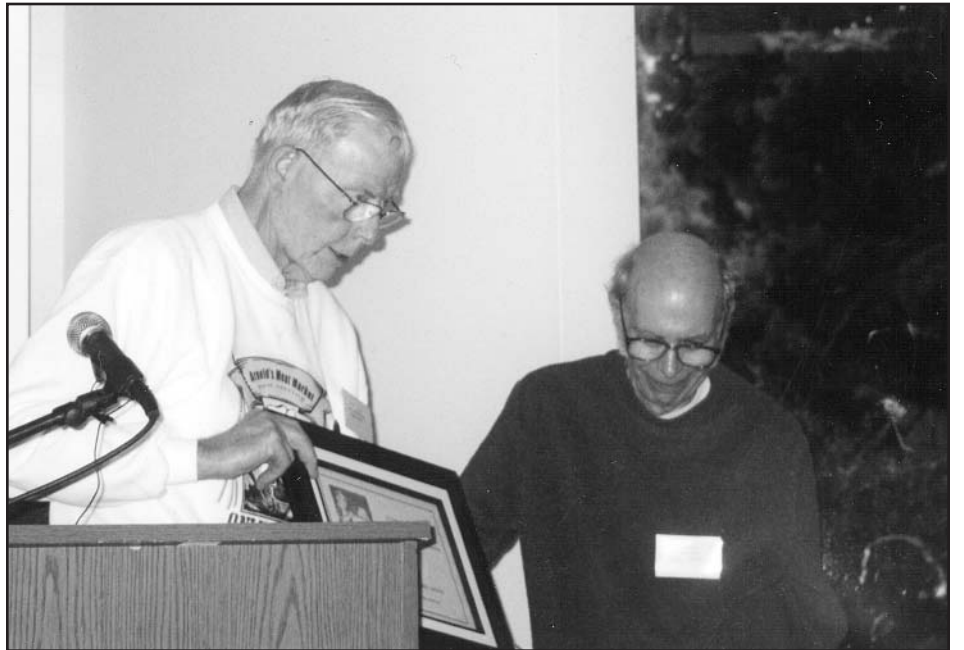
Over the years Olson has been a staunch supporter of the ILWU, lending his considerable skills to the union’s cause, including:

- Addressing the ILWU’s International Convention on two separate occasions;
- Marching with the ILWU at the “Battle in Seattle” during the WTO protest Nov. 30, 1999;
- Writing an op-ed piece entitled “Administration Should Keep Clear of Dock Fight” for the *Seattle Times* Labor Day 2002 edition during the 2002 ILWU contract fight;
- Speaking as an academic expert on behalf of the ILWU during the 2002 contract dispute with reporters from *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *USA TODAY*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Seattle Times*, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, as well as appearing for interviews on CNN, The News Hour with Jim Lehrer and various other media;
- Consulting in the making of the ILWU Coast Labor Relations Committee film on “The Eye of the Storm,” the story of the 2002 lockout;
- Consulting for the ILWU’s Coast Committee in analyzing the PMA’s claims to an ILWU “slowdown” under the Taft-Hartley injunction;
- Giving a presentation on “Rank-and-File Democracy: Traditions and Trends” at the ILWU Education Seminar on “History and Traditions of the Longshore Division” in September 2004 in Palm Springs, Calif.;
- Receiving the 2005 S. Sterling Munro Public Service Teaching Award for linking students to the labor movement;

• Continuing to speak before active and retired ILWU groups on the West Coast;

• Continuing to direct, with Professor Margaret Levi, the “Union Democracy Reexamined” research project on rank-and-file control of the ILWU, involving graduate and undergraduate students in researching labor’s rich history.

## Walter Johnson receives Elaine and Karl Yoneda Award



Clerks’ Local 34 retiree Don Watson, right, presented the 2005 Yoneda Award to Walter L. Johnson, left, at the Southwest Labor Studies Conference May 5 at U.C. Santa Barbara. The award is given annually to the activist who displays a devotion to the ideals of Elaine and Karl Yoneda.

Walter Johnson, who retired earlier this year after serving 20 years as Secretary-Treasurer of the San Francisco Labor Council, received this year’s Yoneda Award.

Karl Yoneda, an ILWU Local 10 activist, founded the Elaine Black Yoneda Memorial Award upon Elaine’s death in 1988 to honor his companion of over 50 years in the labor, peace, civil rights and women’s movement. Karl’s name was added to the award when he died in 1999.

Johnson moved to San Francisco after serving with the 220th Combat Engineers, 20th Armored Division in WWII. His unit was one of three divisions credited with liberating Dachau Concentration Camp. He got a job at Sears in 1951 and joined the Department Store Employees Union, becoming its president in 1958. The members elected him to the local’s top position, secretary-treasurer, in 1964. He won re-election 11 times before becoming secretary-treasurer of the labor council in 1985.

His many achievements as a labor leader include helping an African American woman break the color barrier at Woolworth’s and get a job as a counter sales clerk at the store in 1958.

Unionists from all over the world came to San Francisco to attend events Johnson helped organize. The 1997 Western Hemisphere Conference Against NAFTA and Privatization drew some 350 delegates from 20

countries. They remain in contact to this day, helping each other against the common foe.

During the 2002 longshore lock-out, Johnson spoke at ILWU rallies in Oakland and San Francisco, often bringing howls of laughter with his many jokes and limericks. He worked hard that same year on the SFO Organizing Project, a Bay Area-wide project to unionize workers at San Francisco International Airport. Unfortunately many of the 2,400 workers were de-unionized by Homeland Security a year later. Johnson confronted a spokesperson for Levis’ at the company’s headquarters in San Francisco in 2004 during a demonstration and demanded Levis live up to its promises to allow union representation at its sweatshops in Haiti. Johnson also supported U.S. Labor Against the War in Iraq during his last days in office.

During his 20 years as head of the San Francisco Labor Council Johnson compiled a record of support for progressive causes that few can match. Many of the resolutions and calls for action issued by the Labor Council became models for activity all over the world.

Johnson was such a familiar figure on the picket lines all over the city that in the few times he didn’t show, people would ask: “Where’s Walter?”

—Tom Price

## Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

### RECENT RETIREES:

**Local 8**—William L. Miller, Kevin Wright; **Local 10**—Willie Wise Jr.; **Local 13**—Roger Gonzales, Edward Hightower, Felix Landavazo, Nedo Viducich, Ernest M. Sedano, Luis P. Mora; **Local 19**—Jimmy Copeland; **Local 21**—Joseph Burnham; **Local 26**—Terence Richardson; **Local 27**—Randi Hansen; **Local 29**—Jerry Roiz; **Local 34**—Augustus Koch, James Paton; **Local 63**—Marinus De Zwart; **Local 94**—Kuzma Malahni; **Local 98**—Michael Snyder.

### DECEASED:

**Local 4**—Harold Thorson (Nordine); **Local 10**—John Rudy (Virginia), Mitchel Irwin (Joan), Jesse Bland, Roy Overton Jr., Edward Tavis, Paul Bick Jr.; **Local 12**—Laurie E. Jackson, Arthur Carlsen; **Local 13**—Glen Smith (Jacqueline), Lawrence Hansen, Monroe Dixon; **Local 14**—Andres Valdez; **Local 19**—James Wilkins (Linda), Pete Starkovich,

Joseph Ollivier; **Local 21**—Donovan Welton; **Local 23**—Victor Martineau (Delores); **Local 32**—Gerald Johnson (Sybil), Dan Lisi (Jacquelyn); **Local 34**—Edward E. Hurtado (Phyllis), Fred Reagan; **Local 50**—Louis Sullivan (Judith); **Local 53**—William Buchea, Glen Edenfield; **Local 75**—Arthur Glass (Esmeralda). (Survivors in parenthesis.)

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 4**—Elsie Yettick; **Local 8**—Leola Kline, Cosetta Elliott; **Local 10**—Mildred Thigpen, Mary Trigg, Ethel Branco, Mary Valin, Edith Dracovich, Bertrica Zenn; **Local 13**—Carlota Escarciga, Cassie Smith; **Local 19**—Verna Beck; **Local 34**—Ardeth Jensen, Marian Guerrero; **Local 50**—Evelyn Wahlbom; **Local 52**—Elva Knutson; **Local 63**—Kathryn Bowen; **Local 91**—Edith Shaw; **Local 92**—Ellen Lowe; **Local 94**—Mary Bobich.



# ILWU Book & Video Sale

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

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- The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938** By Harvey Schwartz: new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union's organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. **\$9.00**

VIDEOS:

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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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