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GLOBALIZING SOLIDARITY

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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 files 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 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 a few and a few 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 free trade deals) that supersede national and local laws made by people ostensibly elected by the people. So it comes as no surprise that the MNCs’ “market” laws leave the multinational corporations unfettered to accumulate, consolidate and dominate entire industries and economies, but workers’ unions are constrained by what/false 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 transportation unions rarely 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 American 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 union. 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 Puerto, who supported the ILWU in 2002, went on strike Oct. 15, 2004 demanding a raise from $39 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 requiring unfair fines also will be eliminated, workers will be forced to jettison union contracts and accept their employer’s terms or lose their jobs. Australian unions—the miners, truck drivers, construction workers, teachers and nurses, sole on getting a maximum return to their investors. They are not focusing attention or excessive executive compensation, or excessive executive compensation, or attention to shareholder meetings. They are not focusing their workers’ disadvantage.

These MNCs use every available angle to squeeze every last drop from their labor. 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.

So whether through legislative fiat or right-wing judicial activism, you get robbed not just of your retirement money, but also of 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 inflation 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 worst “proposals” in Congressionals committees are more outrageous than others, but they include measures that would give corporations from seven to 25 years to make contributions to stabilize corporations. It comes as no surprise that the MNCs’ “market” laws leave the multinational corporations unfettered to accumulate, consolidate and dominate entire industries and economies, but workers’ unions are constrained by what/false 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 transportation unions rarely maritime unions, sit all along that transportation chain, our position gives us certain power, but also makes us certain targets.

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Steve Hauff, the control console oper- 
opened, and ran into the control room. 
was standing outside when it hap-
ously.

About 1:30 a.m. last July 22 casu-
al Ortega began closing the vent on the 
bin six at the United Harvest grain 
school, and the blood was just coming 
he was going to go into convulsions 
pressure was low enough that 
check his vitals, so I found that his 
Harrison said. “Pressure points, com-
Nutting said. “I've seen films of elevator explo-
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 technol-
ogy 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 any-
thing 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 hap-
ened minutes later it would have 
happened with them in it.”

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

Grain elevator explodes, no injuries

by Tom Price

Workers were changing shifts at 
The Port of Van-
weeks. Some of the elevator’s wall panels 
are made of fiberglass instead of cor-
rugated steel.

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

It’s a huge elevator. It can load 
80,000 bushels per hour and the facil-
ity 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 posi-
tions.

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

Spittle had arranged for a crane 
operator to get a half rack ready. 
Local 13 BA Norm Tuck arrived 
amost immediately. He had worked as a 
shipbuilder and was able to deter-
mine where the iron had come from. 
“We run a catwalk under the 
walkway of the ship’s superstruc-
ture. This iron was a bracket from the 
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 acci-
dent 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 
befor in my life,” Quintero said. “He 
did everything right. He was wearing his hard hat, 
his vest, he was doing what he should be doing.”

Quintero has worked on the docks 
for 10 years and registered last Octo-
er as an IS 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 water-
front, and that’s okay with me. The 
tempt get shining 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 
dughter.” Quintero continued. “I 
looked at his daughter. She’s the 
same age as my daughter. I couldn’t 
Imagine that little girl mourning for 
his dad.”

by Tom Price

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United Airlines' pensions go bust

The pension crisis stakes grow higher

by Jack Rasmus

A federal bankruptcy court announ-
cement May 10 that United Airlines could pocket $3.2 billion of contributions it owed its 134,000 cur-
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 govern-
ment agency established to insure pri-
ivate pensions, constantly be saddled with total liabilities of United at $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 may be heard—as corporate America accelerates its dis-
mantling 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 its air-
lines of $1.6 billion in pension fund-
ing obligations. As United's CEO, Glenn Tilton, happily declared then, "This legislation will help strengthen United's $9.8 billion pension liability or about two thirds. The workers will lose..." The PBGC had estimated that for a 45-year-old whose plan fails this year, the PBGC would cover a maximum of $11,446 per 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 workers.

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 1,000 Defined Benefit Pension plans have been abandoned by corporations in the U.S., according U.S. Department of Labor hearings on the crisis less than two years ago.

Since 2000 more than 9,000 such plans will have fallen, with the number doubling in 2004 compared to 2003. During the decade of the 1990s the PBGC reported that previously annual pension payment liabilities for an additional 50,000 workers a year were under-funded. Since that time benefit payments has increased since 2000 by an average of an additional 17% each year.

The growing corporate trend toward abandoning traditional pensions has now severely undermined the PBGC and its ability to guarantee even reduced pension benefits to workers. Before the May 10 announcement, the PBGC experienced its largest financial loss in its history, $25 billion in 2004. This followed an $11 billion loss in 2003, plus additional multimillion dollar losses each year since 2000.

So the PBGC now faces its own funding crisis. It has an immediate liability of $69 billion in pension ben-

fict payments and assets of only $26.9 billion. Should other airlines and other industries follow the United example, the 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 just still a ripple. A pension tsunami is taking shape at sea and currently heading toward the retirement coastline. In an emer-

gency report issued in June 2004, the PBGC estimated that companies with

pensions plans under-funded by $50 million or more—that's more than 1,050 pension plans—together had an under-funded liability of $278.6 bil-

lion 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-fund-

ing of corporate pension plans for which the PBGC is liable is $278.6 bill-

ion. 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 exec-
utive director Bradley Belt, "The cur-
rent massive under-funding of defined benefit pensions, compound-
ed 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 Pension plans with a potential total liability of $1.575 trillion.

In January of this year the Bush admin-
istration proposed that compa-

nies with severe pension under-fund-

ing problems take up to seven to 10 years to make up their under-fundings and use the money to sta-

bilize 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 adminis-

tration also proposed a single corpo-
rate bond interest rate to calculate the value of a pension's fund, but with a highly complicated formula that would provide many opportuni-
ties for corporations to manipulate and thus avoid accurately estimating their fund's true value. Finally, the Bush administration proposed a sharp increase in corporate contribu-

tions to the PBGC, from the previous $19 per worker to $30 per worker per year.

For corporations with "below investment grade" pension funds, the PBGC contribution would be even worse than $30. Some airline execu-
tives have responded to that by sug-

gesting that the PBGC take over some plans. They 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 gov-

ernment 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 compa-

nies like US Steel, Lucent, Goodyear, Qwest, R.J. Reynolds—not to men-
tion most of the remaining major air-

lines—with ratings below investment grade will now consider serious dumping their pensions onto an already financially stressed PBGC.

Apparentl that just what the Bush administration wants. It would certainly hasten the demise of the tra-

ditional Defined Benefit Pension sys-


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THE DISPATCHER

May 2005

for the loss of

your retirement funds. Please feel free to enjoy our IP room any time.

United Airlines is deeply sorry for the loss of your retirement funds. Please feel free to enjoy our IP room any time.

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.

Raphael Cornford

This article is an excerpt from Jack Rasmus' just released 512 page book, THE WAR AT HOME: THE CORPO-
RATIVE OFFENSIVE FROM REAGAN TO BUSH, which may be ordered from the website: http://www.kyloproduc-
tions.com or see us on page 10.
Dockers and seafarers on the International Transport Workers’ Federation Fair Practices Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to deal with issues vital to maritime workers. April 12-15 gatherings ideas and representatives from all corners of the world.

ILWU Canada President Tom Duflerene attended as a Dockers’ Section committee member. International Secretariat President Williams represented the ILWU and West Coast ITF Coordinator Jeff Engels represented all ITF Inspectors. Peter Lahay, ILWU Local 400 member, attended as ITF Canadian Coordinator. The conference is one of 642 transport worker unions in the ITF. It represents 4.5 million workers worldwide.

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 examined the new International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), the Ports of Call Code 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 to seafarers into one convention that would be enforceable when ratified by individual countries. It would include anything from the definitions of vessels and seafarers, to standards for hours of work, stowage space and leave.

“The great thing about the ‘super convention’ is that it will be enforceable. It will make these flowery mission statements that say ‘you should,’” Lahay said. “But now we’ll have something in black and white and we will be able to call the Coast Guard down and detain these ships if they don’t follow the rules.”

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, business and government—the ILO is charged with establishing labor rights standards and getting nations to sign and follow them.

The Seafarers’ Association also announced a campaign to raise minimum wages for all seafarers to an American directive to a worldwide agreement. The LMC-NMMF/ILWU, under their flag. Zodiac Marine, a shipping company, was flagged out, the ITF announced.

Many countries use over-zealous security measures to routinely deny shore leave to seafarers. But 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 agreement can be reached.

The ITF Dockers’ Section meeting called on affiliates to provide information on Domestic Workers Package 2 (PP2), which would allow ships owned in France to be registered under their flag. It represents 4.5 million workers worldwide.

“The port industry, with its high growth and balance of power, is the one industry that can be affected by large steamship companies) like 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 listed 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 dockhand discussed the PC 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 25,000 women in its seafaring section and, 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 ports sector and women’s position in maritime world. Thus far, there have not been enough studies to answer questions on how 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 ITF and the Asia-Pacific Regional Committee.

Women’s maternity and reproduction health issues are 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.”
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 do.

More than 200 officers and rank and file members 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 strengths those offer. Through four days of presentations, debate and networking the delegates made good on the gathering’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 Spinoso 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,” Spinoso 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 Spinoso 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 1994 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 the work. Then 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 situated 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 obscene 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 affiliates from 80 countries, presented an overview of the global mining industry, exhorting the delegates to “know your enemy.” He said the industry is expanding at a breakneck rate 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 terminals in the world trade centers. The ITF is trying to work with union affiliates at their terminals to develop and negotiate framework work 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 (POC) campaign. Ship owners sail their vessels under the flags of countries with lax or no 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 ship’s captains are using the new international security regulations to keep dock workers off the ships and make seafarers do cargo handling.”

May 2005
unions plan solidarity

Leys also mentioned another new solidarity collaboration between the ITF and the ILO—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 part of 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 national unions and to work on joint organizing, membership 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 pensions—for more detailed discussions.

The maritime workshop focused mostly on issues of port security and how new security measures were 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 like. 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 DuBrenne. These proposals include extensive and intrusive background checks that require the key issue to be "reasonable suspicion" to deny even longtime longshore workers access to the ports and their jobs.

"The implementation of our members' privacy," DuBrenne said, "and it's one more step on the path to a police state."

DuBrenne said the unions are working together to develop a program that employs and elected officials can support that will demand changes to define the criteria and rationale 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 hamstring 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 grass roots 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 called 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 new co-director of the ITF's Women's Committee, reported on that ITF committee's work. Established in 1984, the ITF's Women's Committee has already made progress in raising, defining and studying women's issues with in the transportation industry, and in developing programs to deal with them.

Lorraine Ryan from the MUA reported how her 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 working 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.

CRISIS 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-

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The Dispatchers • 7

May 2005
May 2005

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 Canada, the United States, Chile, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, 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 communities;

Recalling our recent experience of the most vicious attacks on our members in the Patricia’s dispute on the Australian waterfront, the global campaign for justice in Rio Tinto and the attack on the Westport 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, intimidation and the assault on civil and workers’ rights are threatening entire labor movements. 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 testify 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 workers and stand solidly with them.

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 our members decades of struggle are being eroded in one country by anti-union offensives and work transferred to low-wage countries in a “race to the bottom.”

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

...and 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 global 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.

...and the transport chain to be the targets of our recognition campaigns. WE WILL TAME THEM OR SHAME THEM;

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 economic development and 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 sector.

As delegates gathered here in Long Beach, we pledge that we will not allow this offensive to degrade our rights and the rights of our brothers and sisters every time they occur.

We note that the globalization of capital is creating a race to the bottom for all workers and the attack on the U.S. longshore workers in 2002, we hereby place on record our determination to defend our collective futures.

We will continue to demand the return of 1,500 workers to Blue Diamond encouraging him to respect the large 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’ rights to organize and to deal with their demands. They informed him they would all continue to provide 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 file elected officials 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.

Sharan Burrow, 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 $23 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 jury, but by a naval admiralty.

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MINING AND MARITIME SOLIDARITY
continued from page 7

Australia

Sharan Burrow, the president of the Australian Confederation of Trade Unions, and all the Australian unionists present sounded the alarm on the outlook 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.

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OXBOW WORKERS WIN A REAL UNION

Early on in their organizing drive, the workers from Oxbow Carbon and Minerals held a meeting in a Mexican restaurant near where Carl Cendejas is a longshoreman. The ILWU organizers set up tables, and distributed cards for workers to sign union cards and a letter of support. Though safety was one of the concerns raised by the workers, the organizing committee had to make sure the workers understood the benefits of union membership.

The ILWU organizers talked to the workers about the importance of union membership, and explained how they could benefit from joining. They emphasized the need for safety in the workplace, and how unions could protect workers from unsafe conditions. They also discussed the benefits of health insurance and vacations.

The organizing committee also provided information on the processes for organizing a union, and how workers could help in the campaign. They encouraged workers to talk about the campaign with their co-workers, and to support their efforts.

The organizing committee also discussed the benefits of the union contract that was in place, and how the union would help workers in getting their demands met. They explained how the union would negotiate wages and benefits, and how they would ensure that workers were treated fairly.

The workers were also encouraged to vote for the union in the upcoming election. They were told that by voting for the union, they could ensure that their voice was heard in the workplace.

The organizing committee also discussed the role of the NLRB in the election process. They explained how the NLRB would conduct the election, and how workers could participate in the process.

The organizing committee also encouraged workers to get involved in the campaign, and to vote for the union in the upcoming election. They emphasized the importance of voting for the union, and how it could make a difference in the workplace.
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 grocers 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 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.

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“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
Professor David Olson honored at his retirement

Northwest Coast Committee

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 Committee

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Professor Margaret Levi, the "Union Democracy Reexamined" research professor at the Bell Harbor Conference Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gathered, laid the foundation for the Labor Studies Center, where workers and students gather
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**ILWU Book & Video Sale**

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

**BOOKS:**

The ILWU Story: unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and dozens of rare photos of the union in action. $5.00

The Big Strike: By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. $6.50

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