ILWU Needs You!
BY DAVID ARIAN  ILWU International President

The ILWU is calling upon all of its members, pensioners, their families and friends to join with workers worldwide in protecting our standard of living.

With solidarity our only weapon, we will be fighting for our future, and for our children's future. We will be fighting for our very right to exist as we choose. We will be fighting against some of the most powerful forces on the planet. But we can win. We have to.

On December 3, the ILWU's new International Executive Board dedicated the union's resources to a tri-national campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). With the help of our members in the US, Canada and our allies in Mexico, we will strive to defeat NAFTA in its present form, or have it modified to include the essential protections for workers it currently lacks.

The most visible part of our campaign will be our petition drive. Starting this month, and to continue into February, we hope to persuade 100,000 people—ILWU members, other union members, our friends, our families, our neighbors—to sign on to the proposition that, unless NAFTA contains basic labor rights for workers in all three countries, it must be resoundingly rejected. (For details, see the stories on pages 3, 6 and 7.)

As threatening as NAFTA is on its own, it's just one piece in a global turf war being waged by multi-national conglomerates. It's just one step toward a free trade zone extending from Canada, through the Caribbean and all the way down to the tip of South America. It's the USA's bid for market-share supremacy in the Western Hemisphere—a response to the rapidly-developing trading blocs in Europe and Asia. And as all this jockeying and positioning for dominance whirls on, we will have to be resolute and prepared.

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IEB Targets Free Trade

SAN FRANCISCO—Whether it’s under the guise of free trade or immigration law, the ILWU will not tolerate any government giveaway of its members’ jobs.

This was the message recently delivered by the ILWU’s International Executive Board. Meeting December 3-4 at ILWU headquarters in San Francisco, the IEB debated, considered and ultimately adopted programs and policies to safeguard its members.

PRIMARY TARGETS

The Board’s primary targets are certain immigration laws and the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—all of which place ILWU members, as well as workers throughout the US, Canada and Mexico, at risk. Central to the union’s efforts to counteract these measures, the ILWU insisted, is the establishment of essential “fair labor standards” in all three countries.

Around that simple concept, the IEB approved a plan for a massive petition drive, as presented by ILWU International President David Arian. The petition, Arian explained, urges the US Congress, the Canadian Parliament and the Mexican Senate to reject NAFTA and use the following:

- **Worker Rights**: freedom of speech and association; the right to organize, bargain collectively and to strike, with wages and hours standards; prohibition of child labor; prohibition of forced labor; adequate occupational health and safety rules; regulations and standards; and prohibition of employment discrimination based on race, sex, age or other arbitrary and unfair criteria.

- **Tough Enforcement Mechanisms**: an independent tri-national commission, with labor members, which will investigate and adjudicate the lobbying effort. The ILWU’s goal: 100,000 signatures.

The Board also adopted two statements of policy, to be presented to Congress, opposing NAFTA due to its potentially devastating effects on landside maritime and sugar—industries which employ tens of thousands of ILWU members.

The statements said that NAFTA, as written, would attract foreign investment, in port facilities in Mexico, permit shippers to bypass US and Canadian ports, and threaten the very existence of the US sugar industry by allowing cheap Mexican sugar to flood the US market. (For the full text of the statements, see page 4.)

IMMIGRATION LAWS

On a related matter, Washington Rep Lindsay McLaughlin briefed the board on developments in the union’s ongoing dispute with the Bush Administration over immigration laws. As reported in previous issues of The Dispatcher, the ILWU is tussling with US Department of State and other agencies over rulings which allow foreign shippers to use their crews for certain longshore work in US waters. Many Democrats in Congress, McLaughlin said, support measures to reverse these rulings in order to protect American dock workers.

A positive resolution of this conflict will have the union’s top legislative priority when Congress convenes January 20, McLaughlin said. Second, but not far behind, will be the legislative groundwork needed to support the union’s drive to secure basic labor rights under NAFTA—or, in the alternative, defeat the free trade agreement altogether.

The ILWU has a much better chance of making its case in the new Congress—and with the new President, Dick Wise and Log Committee member Glen Ramiskey (Local 24) reported. McLaughlin researched the candidates’ records and positions on various issues important to the ILWU. The Titled Officers subsequently determined how the union’s Political Action Fund should be disbursed.

Most ILWU-backed candidates won, McWilliams reported. Monies allocated from the general fund for voter education, he said, had a positive impact on a number of key races.

Presenting the usual financial report, International Secretary-Treasurer Leon Harris stressed that, while the overall financial picture has improved since last year, the union must remain cautious about expenditures. The IEB unanimously adopted the report.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

In other actions, the Board:

- Welcomed new board member Robert Moreno. After entertaining recommendations from the Northern California District Council and affiliation to address the crisis in the Northwest timber industry.
- Approved letters of commendation to the IBU leaders and members who helped repeal California’s regressive Bunker Fuel Tax. The tax has been attributed to the loss of some 1,000 jobs in the state, hitting hardest on the IBU and its employers.
- Approved the new ILWU International Commission to strengthen ties with unions worldwide, particularly in the Pacific Rim. The Board affirmed the actions of the Longshore Division Caucus, which established the commission in May. Commission responsibilities will eventually include all segments of the ILWU.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Among the Board’s special guests was Fred Robb, a neighborhood neighbor, who detailed his organization’s efforts toward universal health care. Following his presentation, the IEB authorized a contribution of $3,500 and supported sending Vice President McWilliams to speak at a health care rally in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The December 12 rally drew hundreds of demonstrators from across the nation, who appealed to President-elect Clinton to make a universal, single-payer health care plan a top priority of his administration. A report on the rally will be in next month’s issue of The Dispatcher.

The Board also heard reports from San Francisco ILWU members Zeke Ruelas, Robert Orsonnio, Louis Wright and Ray Familiante, who showed a video and discussed their recent trip to Mexico. The video and the reports highlighted ILWU members’ work with dock workers, a massive demonstration against Mexican government policies, and an interview with opposition tough sanctions on players, industries and countries.

- Dislocated Workers: targeted employer’s jobs and adequate programs, income support and other assistance.

MOBILIZING MEMBERS

Launched this month through February, this drive requires that members throughout the community, be active, and expand solidarity with workers throughout the world.

ILWU District Councils, Organizing Committees and National Representatives are participating in various activities in the Western US, particularly in Washington and California, under the direction of international staff, including Lindsay McLaughlin coordinating
International sugar trade turns sour

By LINDSAY McLAUGHLIN
1/17/92

As international negotiators discuss the future of trade between nations, it is important to reflect on the significance of Hawaiian sugar to our union, the State of Hawaii, and the standard of living for workers both here and abroad.

Intense ILWU organizing drives in the early 1940s consolidated thousands of sugar mill, warehouse, and field workers into our union. Fed up with the low, oppressive wage rates that the employers were offering and a voice in spending the employers’ housing fund, a forty-hour work week, and a voice in union, the State of Hawaii, and the union, we set out to win a great victory in both wages and working conditions. Harry Bridges and Bob Robertson said the ILWU opposed the strike “will end one hundred years of economic slavery in Hawaii.

Today, Hawaii’s field workers have the highest wage and benefit package of any agricultural workers in the world. In return, the Hawaiian workers have proven to be among the most productive in the world.

Unlike other farm support programs, the government administers a sugar loan program at no cost to the US taxpayer, and limits the amount of foreign sugar entering the American market. The program has served the country well in ensuring a supply of sugar for consumption, reasonable prices, and protects US sugar workers from unfair competition from countries dumping cheap sugar on the market.

Unbelievably, the US sugar program is an attack on workers who believe that consumers are paying an inflated price for sugar, and look toward third world countries to provide us with cheaper sugar.

GATT, NAFTA UNFAIR

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Uruguay Round) offers Hawaiian sugar workers uncertainty about the future of their jobs. The lame-duck Bush Administration is negotiating sugar trade agreements, but fails to even the playing field with countries which subsidize their sugar at a much higher rate. An unfair advantage, particularly for Europe, would jeopardize US sugar producers. Furthermore, if the ILWU’s efforts are held behind closed doors, we cannot be certain of the effects on US sugar until the negotiations conclude. In any event, we must lobby members of Congress for continued protection in ensuring that the US sugar industry remains viable.

The current sugar provision in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) threatens the very existence of the US sugar industry by eliminating barriers to import barriers, including all duties, allowing cheap Mexican sugar to flood the US market. The displacement and blacklisting of the traditional workers’ rights are secured, and it must not allow the US sugar industry to compete.

Based on massive investments in private enterprise, NAFTA: Sugar Industry

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The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) threatens the very existence of the US sugar industry. NAFTA will eliminate barriers to import barriers, including all duties, allowing cheap Mexican sugar to flood the US market.

The ILWU opposes the landslide maritime provisions which are expected to dwarf those now in place along the US/Mexico border. The NAFTA blueprint for success depends on massive investments in private enterprises. Also, by design, it precludes observances of any labor rights and tramples the aspirations of ordinary people for freedom, a better way of life, and a fair share in the fruits of their labor—one example of this being the displacement and his existing of the traditional workers’ rights are secured, and it must not allow the US sugar industry to compete.

Ambitious plans for new port developments in Mexico are closely tied to Regional Maquiladora Programs which are expected to dwarf those now in place along the US/Mexico border. The NAFTA blueprint for success depends on massive investments in private enterprises. Ambitious plans for new port developments in Mexico are closely tied to Regional Maquiladora Programs which are expected to dwarf those now in place along the US/Mexico border.

Transport workers in North America will be exposed to increased attacks on their working conditions and benefits because of the landside maritime provisions of NAFTA. The development of the infrastructure in Mexico and the denial of bargaining rights to workers will permit shippers to bypass US and Canadian ports during strikes or other labor disputes, thereby Kwaphawn labor unions and undercutting rival ports and businesses.

The ILWU opposes the landside maritime provisions of NAFTA. The agreement must prevent unfair competition by ensuring that internationally recognized workers’ rights are secured, and it must not allow transport employers to bypass US ports and business, and bypasses and hundreds. The ILWU also recognizes the need to build closer relationships and solidarity with workers in Mexico and Canada, as well as labor movements around the world.
LAS VEGAS—All the glitter of the Las Vegas strip could not outhead the gleaming hopes and determination of 550 striking hotel workers and their supporters who marched for justice here on December 5. On that evening, more than 20,000 union members and their families from hundreds of locals and labor councils across the US descended on Las Vegas to lend support to members of four unions at the Frontier Hotel and Gambling Hall who have been on strike for 16 months. It was the largest labor demonstration ever in Las Vegas and one of the largest in the history of the West.

The march down a two-mile segment of the strip, past resplendently gaudy hotels and casinos, stopped traffic for about three hours. Throngs of casino-goers crowded the walkways to watch. The ILWU’s historic banner “An Injury to One is an Injury to All” drew frequent bursts of applause from onlookers.

LINE IN THE SAND

The weekend action was declared “Desert Solidarity: Our Line In The Sand” by the AFL-CIO. Huge contingents came from the Teamsters, Communication Workers, Carpenters and Electrical Workers. There were workers from unions in garment, chemical, sheet metal, air transport, food handling, oil refineries, asbestos, rubber, and many more. There were ironworkers, letter carriers, office workers, laborers, operating engineers, machinists, seafarers, train dispatchers, painters, glaziers and millwrights.

Thousands of marchers were workers in the dozens of other Las Vegas hotels and casinos. As they came off their work shifts, hundreds of them queued up to catch special “Solidarity Express” buses to the march. The ILWU contingent included about 250 marchers from California, Washington and Hawaii. Longshore Local 13, Wilmington, chartered buses that braved a snowstorm in the Sierras to carry intrepid ILWU members, including pensioners and family members, to the march. Los Angeles City Council candidate Diane Middleton worked with Local 13 to bring community welfare rights and youth advocates on the buses as well.

Most of the ILWU Executive Board marched. Board member Kuseibio Lapenia, President of Local 142, Hawaii, said: “We’ve all got to contribute to help end this strike. It is a sign of the times. The economy is bad and this company’s actions are a reflection of that. If it doesn’t get better we will be fighting more lay-offs and cuts. We see the same thing happening in Hawaii.” ILWU pensioners Art Kaunisto and Rex Munson shared memories from ILWU history with younger members on the long bus ride from San Pedro. “We used to do this in LA,” Kaunisto recalled at the march. “We still have the Harbor March. This here is one hell of a labor parade, and we need it with all the lay-offs and companies leaving the US.”

The march concluded at a rally with more than 30 national labor leaders. ILWU President David Arian addressed the crowd, saying this march was an example of what the labor movement needs. “We stand for jobs, but not just jobs—jobs with dignity,” he called for a return to “solidarity union tactics” and for defeat of the North American Free Trade Agreement which threatens “continued erosion of our standard of living.”

Not one Frontier Hotel striker has crossed the picket line since the strike began September 21, 1991. The four unions—HERE’s Culinary Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165, Teamsters Local 995, Operating Engineers Local 561 and Carpenter’s Local 1780—walked after fruitless negotiations ran out for more than a year. The unions wanted Frontier to sign the pattern agreement already accepted by other large Las Vegas companies. Shortly after the strike began, an NLRB judge termed the negotiations a “sham” in which Frontier management showed no intention of settling. General manager Tom Elardo, whose family owns Frontier, stated the hotel would never sign the pattern agreement, adding, “therefore the strike will never end.”

Management demands big concessions, including a four-dollar-an-hour wage cut, elimination of pensions and seniority, and cuts in health care benefits. They are trying to run the hotel with strikebreakers, despite reportedly large losses. The hotel has cut prices and run promotions openly appealing to anti-union visitors. Acts of sporadic violence against pickets by Frontier guards who brandish weapons have heightened tensions.

Chris Burks, a striking cocktail waitress said, “They shot beebees at us, turned water hoses on us when the food trucks came to the line. Security picked fights with picketers. The reason we stuck together is, you can’t let them get away with it, treating us like that, changing work rules, getting rid of people who have earned a lot of benefits, randomly firing people to scare us. I walked out after being there 20 years.”

John Wilhelms, western regional director of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, said that since the defeat of the PATCO strike, “it has been widely believed that the strike is no longer an effective tool for organized labor. We are showing in Las Vegas that it can be an effective tool.”

YOU CAN HELP

The next time you visit Las Vegas, be sure to avoid the Frontier Hotel and patronize any of the following union hotels and casinos:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Union</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballys</td>
<td>Las Vegas Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caesars</td>
<td>Las Vegas Hilton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palace</td>
<td>Sahara</td>
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<td>Circus</td>
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<td>Circus</td>
<td>Showboat</td>
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<td>Desert</td>
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<td>Inn</td>
<td>Mirage</td>
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<td>Dunes</td>
<td>Silver City</td>
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<td>El Cortez</td>
<td>O’Shea’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Dorado</td>
<td>Slots-A-Fun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excalibar</td>
<td>Stardust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzgeralds</td>
<td>Rainbow Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flamingo</td>
<td>Riviera</td>
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<td>Hilton</td>
<td>Tropicana</td>
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<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Western</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry’s</td>
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<td>Nugget</td>
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Over 20,000 unionists marched on Las Vegas to show their support for workers involved in a long, bitter and sometimes violent strike against the Frontier Hotel. Above, the ILWU banner says it all.

Chilly weather didn’t deter demonstrators, even ILWU International Vice President/Hawaii Tommy Trask (second from left), who’s used to a much warmer climate. With Trask are Southern California ILWU members Linda Palacios, Luisa Gratz, Steve Beibich and Julia Beibich. Above, from Wilmington, Local 13 President Joe Cortez, second from left, and other members.
NAFTA COUNTRIES (1990-1991)

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<th></th>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
<th>CANADA</th>
<th>MEXICO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions)</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force (millions)</td>
<td>133.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Week (hours) - Manufacturing</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Pay &amp; Benefits - Steel</td>
<td>$21.67</td>
<td>$21.53</td>
<td>$2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Pay &amp; Benefits - Autos</td>
<td>$23.95</td>
<td>$31.23</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Pay &amp; Benefits - Textiles</td>
<td>$10.31</td>
<td>$11.01</td>
<td>$1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Disputes (average days lost per year per 1,000 inhabitants, 1987-1989)</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
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In 1988, Canadian conservatives pushed for free trade with the US. It would bring "jobs, jobs, jobs," they promised. The debate was fast and furious, but, in the end, the conservatives won. The US/Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA) went into effect in January 1989.

Among other things, the FTA allowed manufacturers to willy-nilly set up shop anywhere in the two countries that they pleased. With Canada's tougher labor laws, it didn't take much incentive for companies to transfer operations to so-called "right to work" states in the southern US, where wages are depressed and where worker rights are either nonexistent or not enforced.

By March, 1991, Canada had lost over 435,000 "jobs, jobs, jobs." Now, proponents of free trade are at it again. They are trying to convince us that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will be a well-spring of prosperity.

NAFTA doesn't mandate higher standards in the "level playing field" they talk about is really a slippery slope.

Here's a lot they won't tell you. But we will.

CORPORATE GLOBALIZATION

Free trade, as proposed, is just an another step in the "globalization" of the world economy, another means to allow corporations to freely move their funds and facilities to wherever the highest profit can be made. In preparation of NAFTA, sectors of the US transportation industry are already buying up pieces of Mexico's infrastructure—the country's transportation and utilities network that makes possible the transport, manufacture, and distribution of goods and services. It will soon be possible for employers on both sides of the border to flaunt labor laws and make an end run around any union contract or lawful strike.

The loss of jobs isn't the only worry;

MEXICO PORTS

In glowing (and not-so-subsidized) terms, they describe a "free trade" future in which all the low-skilled manufacturing work is done by Mexicans, while Canadians and Americans thrive in high-tech. We'll all be a lot better off. Or so they say. But there is much they don't say.

UNTOLD STORY

But there is much they don't say. They don't say, for example, that NAFTA is predicted to cause the loss of over 550,000 American jobs by the year 2000; that Canadians will lose hundreds of thousands of jobs, too; and that the continued exploitation and oppression of Mexican workers and peasants is an untreated but necessary component of "free trade."

They don't want to talk about NAFTA's Trade Commission and Secretariat, which will oversee the implementation of the agreement and settle trade disputes. They don't want us to know that this group of… who? appointed by whom…? will have the authority to reject existing laws that could be construed as barriers to trade, including federal, state and local regulations protecting workers, the public, the environment—the list goes on.

They don't breathe a word about "harmonization"—a sugar-coated code word for the lowering of standards. They don't tell us that, under NAFTA, laws, social programs and regulations of the three countries must be brought in line with one another; and, since there's also the lowering—the "harmonization"—of labor standards in the United States and Canada to the levels set in Mexico, as the chart, far left, indicates.

Another critical element of free trade and "globalization" is "privatization"—a ploy by Big Business to get governments to sell off whatever control they have over the regulation, maintenance, and development of industries and services.

Business also demands that governments, like Mexico, "maintain tight control over workers and their unions—often eliminating the right to strike, or the right to safely join a union—under NAFTA's first page."

Recent developments in Mexico are a perfect example of what this process looks like in all its ugly reality. Intermodal port authority, was created in 1989 by President Salinas de Gortari expressly to privatize the ports and related industries and to charge higher fees and thus lower port efficiency and productivity.

The purpose of this program became evident by the summer of 1991, when...
the Mexican government took over the port of Vera Cruz, sold its facilities (and future development) to private investors, and dissolved its four waterfront unions. Nationally, port privatization has already brought in over $500 million from private investors. As defined by Puertos, Mexico's main objective is to attract investment by having fine port facilities and creating the necessary conditions to set up local industries which, whilst ensuring regular visits to the ports by the shipping lines, will also make use of local labor for the assembly of goods before returning them to the country of origin. Now that Puertos Mexicanos has opened the way to modernizing ports through private investment, the government has turned around and disbanded Puertos so that the port can be sold off to the highest bidder.

This drive to speed up and privatize port development is fueled equally by US interests (ship, truck, rail), Eurocapital held in both private and public sectors. As revealed recently in the Journal of Commerce: "Mexican port officials hope that by upgrading the infrastructure of the ports, capping costs and improving efficiency and security, they can capture cargoes that now moves through the United States."

MAQUILADORA CONNECTION

Mexico's Port developments are closely tied to regional maquiladora programs: the newer projects are adjacent to existing or projected rail lines and highways that connect directly to a US port of entry. In other instances, as with Ensenada in the west, or Vera Cruz to the east, the expansion of Mexican port facilities is geared to serve the maquiladora industry with neighboring US ports on the Pacific or Gulf coasts.

The strategy, defended as boosting Mexico's economy through such enclaves as important economic engines for construction, and for exporting domestic goods (and maquiladora products), makes it possible to handle almost any commodity by any transportation mode from coast to coast.

But, as one bankster in Mexico put it, "There is not enough money in Mexico to develop our highways and railroads and ports. We have to rely on foreign investment." The level of foreign investment has risen from less than $20 million in 1987 to over $40 million today. Even Puertos Mexicanos, with a budget of $126 million, has welcomed over $20 million from foreign investors, especially those in the US, Japan, and Singapore.

Most recently, US shippers, led by Sea-Land and American President Lines, have secured guarantees of further penetration of Mexico's stevedoring and terminal industries: in conjunction with NAFTA, US shipping lines will have the right to develop and fully control their own shoreside facilities. This drive to speed up and privatize port development is fueled equally by US interests (ship, truck, rail). Euro

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The role of railroads and trucking is pivotal:

They will make it easier for shippers to by-pass longshore labor (and stevedoring companies) in both countries.

They will enable the expansion of maquiladora programs that will dwarf present border enterprises: giant manufacturing plants, like auto and steel, will move to Mexico without concern about supply and distribution.

Transportation enterprises based in Mexico will be able to undercut and whisipe ports and businesses, and bypass unions to serve the Gulf Coast and border cities.

Put simply, the intermodal technologies and port facilities now in place (or scheduled for completion by 1994) would permit shippers in the Pacific Coast trades to bypass US ports in the event of natural disasters or strikes.

Mexican longshoremen and truckers are equally vulnerable—as are, ironically, the Mexican investors so eager to finance these developments. And the nearer NAFTA approaches, the more Mexican unionists, particularly those in oil, auto, general manufacturing, and longshore, are coming under attack.

The ANSWER

At first glance, the way for labor to avoid potential catastrophe seems simple: call a halt to all international trade agreements and protect workers from dislocation and exploitation.

But in the ILWU know the issue is infinitely more complex than that. As we told the US Senate Finance Committee in 1970, "We oppose protectionism which we fear will feed inflation and provoke retaliation to the point where millions of Americans will be affected."

Because our membership includes longshore workers who rely on international commerce for employment, and sugar workers in Hawaii who need legislative protection from sugar imports, and warehouse workers who handle both domestic and international products, and hotel workers whose livelihood rests on a growing global economy—for all these reasons—we know that we have to come up with a solution to the trade problem that answers all of our members' concerns.

That's why the ILWU's response to free trade is taking place on several levels, including political action, coalitions with other unions, and support for workers and their unions in Mexico and elsewhere in their struggle for basic trade union rights: freedom of association, free collective bargaining, fair representation.

ILWU International President David Arian summed it up best in his August column for The Dispatcher: "We've got to do more than just throw up our hands and complain about how low-paid Mexican workers can take our jobs. We've got to actively support them in their struggle against exploitation because, in doing so, we protect ourselves and our families."

That's the ILWU's version of "harmonization"—and, unlike NAFTA's, it won't leave us singing the blues. The Mexican government busted four longshore unions in the Port of Vera Cruz last year. The time-honored dispatch system was replaced by a lottery system, pro-union members were blackballed, and wages plummeted from $7 an hour to $7 a day. Left, the beautiful, old union hall remains empty; above; dockworkers crowd into other quarters for their meetings.
torture of detained labor activists “suspected” in Iraq

Canadian Labor Congress President Robert White has sent a letter to the Iraqi government, pointing out that “not only is torture suspected” in the case of five labor activists arrested as textile plant in Karbuk, “but there is also a chance that these workers will be killed.”

While, writing on behalf of the CLC, called on the Iraqi government to “ensure that these workers are not tortured, are given a just and speedy trial, and if no charges are laid the workers are to be immediately released.”

The letter was issued as a result of efforts of Internationalist Italian Workers in Canada to draw solidarity with the struggle of Iraqi workers.

(Source: Worker Today)

Of Running Shoes and Greed

By JIM HIGHTOWER

The Nike Shoe company, an American company making $3.4 billion a year selling shoes, is not making shoes in America—not any more. They shut down the last American plants in 1990. They pay Michael Jordan $8 million a year to do that and that says: “Just Do It.” Well, Nike did it. They moved to Korea.

Why didn’t they move to Korea? They didn’t want to pay American workers eight to ten bucks an hour. Now, we’re not getting rich on eight to ten dollars an hour, are you? Nonetheless, that was too much for Nike. They could go to Korea and get labor over there for one dollar an hour. But Korea has a real interesting economic policy. They’re trying to raise the wages of their workers. It’s a novel idea, isn’t it?

That was too much for Nike. They said, “Well, you’re going to raise wages here, then we’re going to go on down the road.” And that’s what they did using contact arrangements. They went on down to Indonesia where they employ some 22,000 impoverished workers making your Nikes for you, not paying a dollar an hour. They’re paying just over one dollar a day to workers down there.

They’re paying it to people like Tree Mugianti. She’s an eighteen-year-old woman in a Nike plant in Tangkas. It’s a plant that is not just hot and humid, 100 degrees and 100 percent humidity, but it reeks with the fumes of the glue and the plastic and the rubber and the paints that they use to make our Nikes, not just burning your eyes, but burning your lungs. Tree works ten hours a day, six days a week, compulsory overtime, making about sixteen cents an hour.

WAGES DOWN, PRICES UP

The government says Nike is paying wages at 35 percent beneath what is needed to meet the minimum physical needs of a single adult. She works in that hot, dangerous plant, and when she gets up to go home, she feels so afraid that she’s going to haul off one of those pairs of Nikes.

Well, how about us? Has the price of our Nikes gone down any? That’s the rationale of all this move. It’s gotten help consumers we’ve got international price competition here. Their labor costs have gone from $10 to $15 cents an hour. Have our Nikes gone down a all? Not a bit. You don’t have to be in Who’s Who to know what’s what.

That’s what they’re stealing, just pure and simple. They’re stealing from us and from Tree Mugianti. Nike can get a shoe for $5.60 out of Indonesia: $5.60 to get the materials, to pay the managers, do the contract work, pay the workers, put it in a box, ship it over here to your store where you pay up to $200 for it.

Now, the world shoe market is not so dog-eat-dog that we’ve got to go around the world searching for people who will take two dimes to make a $200 pair of shoes. This is not global competitiveness, it’s global greed. They take $10 from us, they give 15 cents to them, and they pocket the difference.

In the 1980’s, Oregon based Nike closed its last U.S. footwear factory, in Saco, Maine, while establishing most of its new factories in South Korea. In the late 80’s, South Korean laborers gained the right to form independent unions and to strike. The company shifted new factories to poorer countries such as Indonesia, where labor rights are non-existent and wages are a bit of a joke for the United States of America.

(Jim Hightower is the former Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Texas. These remarks were excerpted from his address to the Machinists 33rd Convention in Montreal.)
ILWU attends Japan longshore convention

By SEAN ARIAN
Intern, ILWU International Dept.

TOKYO—A delegation of ILWU officials attending the All Japan Dockworkers Federation’s 20th Anniversary Convention here walked away from the meeting with a deeper understanding of their Japanese counterparts and a formal agreement to unite and commonly defend existing contracts and other conditions of employment.

The agreement, which includes the ILWU, the ILA, the All Japan Dockworkers Union and the Waterfront Workers of Australia, was the culmination of a visit to the convention by ILWU International President David Arian, International Vice President Brian McWilliams and Coast Committee Member Jim Spinosa.

“Dockworkers of this area (Pacific Rim) are commonly threatened,” the joint union document declared, with specific reference to the “polices of some governments, technological changes, and other steps taken by employers to reduce costs” which “are having serious effects on employment opportunities and working conditions.”

Japanese dockworkers to visit ILWU

The second delegation of the All Japan Dockworkers’ Union is visiting the ILWU as a follow-up to the October 7 meeting in San Francisco.

January 6 (Wednesday): Arrive San Francisco; sight-seeing in the city.

January 7 (Thursday): Tour of ILWU International Office and Bay Area ports; San Francisco Warriors game.

January 8 (Friday): Local 10 morning dispatch and information exchange; dinner with rank-and-file.

January 9 (Saturday): Arrive Los Angeles; sight-seeing in the city.

January 10 (Sunday): Free day.

The unions agreed that, in the interests of their respective memberships, they would “work in unity” to achieve common objectives.

At the convention, the ILWU delegation got an inside look at the challenges facing Japanese longshoremen, including long work weeks, health and safety hazards, and disputes with shipping lines. American President Lines, NYK and other companies. A few days later, the Americans and Japanese held a second meeting in which such efforts were extended and other agreements were reached.

A delegation from the All Japan Dockworkers Union will visit the ILWU the West Coast and Hawaii in January. For information, see the schedule below.

Common Threat

In the United States and around the world, we are faced with a common problem: the companies that employ us are multinational, and have multinational business strategies. This is especially true in the economically vital area of the Pacific Rim. Unions and workers must have an international perspective if they wish to survive in this environment. In the Pacific Rim we have a common employer. We face a common threat. Only by understanding and acting in an international manner can we present demands to specific employers, and face the threats which face us. We need to focus on specific companies that affect us all. We need to share information. We need to discuss what can be done.

It is for this reason that we propose follow-ups to the October 7 meeting to be held after we have gathered and digested the information from individual countries. We propose to host this meeting in San Francisco in early April, the focus of which would be to develop a common strategy in regards to individual companies and the impact we might make. As this coincides with the contract negotiation period on the West Coast, it could be very useful in sending a powerful message to our employers.

To this end we request the participation of unions familiar with the ILWU information about the shipping lines that are serviced by the ports in their particular country by November 15, 1992. We will have comprehensive reports back to all participants by the end of the year.

Common Demand

1. Representatives of three dockworkers unions of the Pacific area, namely the All Japan Dockworkers’ Union (Zenkokukowan), the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU) of New Zealand, though not in attendance in Tokyo and declared its support for the objectives of the Pacific Area dockworkers organizations. The Waterside Workers Union of New Zealand, though not in attendance in Tokyo, also is in agreement with the above mentioned objectives.

4. The International Longshoremen’s Association of the USA was also represented. While it could not present its delegates to Tokyo, they would present demands to relevant employers, government, or port owners. ILWU International President David Arian, International Vice President Brian McWilliams and Coast Committee Member Jim Spinosa October 5-7 attended the first-ever Asian Pacific Rim Dockers Convention here sponsored by the International Transport Federation (ITF), the meeting drew union representatives from all over the Pacific—from Japan to Singapore to Australia—to the tiny nation of Vanuatu. Very few delegates had good news to share.

7. The ILWU International Dept.

Pacific Rim dock unions at first-ever conference

By SEAN ARIAN
Intern, ILWU International Dept.

YOKOHAMA, Japan—ILWU International President David Arian, International Vice President Brian McWilliams and Coast Committee Member Jim Spinosa October 5-7 attended the first-ever Asian Pacific Rim Dockers Conference here sponsored by the International Transport Federation (ITF). The meeting drew union representatives from all over the Pacific—from Japan to Singapore to Australia—to the tiny nation of Vanuatu. Very few delegates had good news to share.

In fact, there are problems almost everywhere—India, Malaysia, Korea, and more—with three trends resurging again and again.

First is the growing use of seamen to do traditional longshore work. It’s an issue that’s surfaced in the US, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Brazil and Southern Europe.

Second is the move toward privatization. Contracts are sold off—ports and workers’ rights and jobs along with them. In some countries, such as India, Malaysia and Britain, a private port will open just a few miles from an existing port, with a new, non-union, force.

Third, and most ominous, are the outright attacks on labor—a trend seen in almost every country represented at the conference. No contract, no union is safe. With a single act, a union can be destroyed. It just ask New Zealand.

Despite the setbacks, delegates were united in looking to the future. In a show of solidarity, they resolved that “cargo handling work should be done by dockworkers” and agreed to form the ITF’s full resources to a high gear campaign, including calling on seafaring unions to negotiate contracts in keeping with the resolution.

ITF member organizations also agreed to work together to resolve mutual problems in the spirit of international solidarity. In particular, the ILWU forged an agreement with Australia’s Waterside Workers Federation, Japan’s Zenkokukowan, and the International Longshoremen’s Association to “share information and act in an international manner, with comprehensive goals in mind, to better serve the interests of our members and all dockworkers in the Pacific Rim.”

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The agreement, which includes the ILWU, the ILA, the All Japan Dockworkers Union and the Waterfront Workers of Australia, was the culmination of a visit to the convention by ILWU International President David Arian, International Vice President Brian McWilliams and Coast Committee Member Jim Spinosa.

"Dockworkers of this area (Pacific Rim) are commonly threatened," the joint union document declared, with specific reference to the "polices of some governments, technological changes, and other steps taken by employers to reduce costs" which "are having serious effects on employment opportunities and working conditions."
ILWU comes through for Kauai Relief Fund

The future is looking just that much brighter for ILWU Local 142 members on the Island of Kauai who are struggling to rebuild their homes—and their lives—in the aftermath of Hurricane Iniki, the worst storm ever to hit the Hawaiian Islands.

In response to our appeal for donations to the ILWU Kauai Relief Fund, many ILWU/IBU members have dug deep into their pockets and sent generous contributions.

Not the least among these are the members, pensioners and widows of supercargoes and clerks Local 40 in Portland, Oregon, who, as of November 6, have contributed almost $10,000. "Their numbers may be small, but their hearts are large," said Local 40 Secretary-Treasurer Larry Clark.

The International has been collecting donations on behalf the hurricane victims since the storm hit Kauai September 11. At the International Executive Board meeting on December 3, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Leon Harris presented a check to Local 142 officers Bobo Lapenisa and Guy Fujimura for the most recent donations.

International staffers pitched in, too. A quick pass of the hat netted about $50 each.

More donations are needed, however. The devastation on Kauai is massive—homes, businesses, crops. Many ILWU members and their families are homeless and/or jobless. They need your immediate and generous help.

To contribute, send a check or money order payable to "ILWU," noting on the bottom that it is for "Kauai Disaster Relief"—to: ILWU International Office, 1185 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Important Notice on ILWU Political Action Fund

Delegates to the 28th Triennial Convention of the ILWU, meeting in Seattle, Washington, June 3-7, 1991, amended Article X of the International Constitution to read:

"SECTION 2. The International shall establish a Political Action Fund which shall consist exclusively of voluntary contributions. The union will not favor or disadvantage any member because of the amount of his/her contribution or the decision not to contribute. In no case will a member be required to pay more than his/her pro rata share of the union's collective bargaining expenses. Reports on the status of the fund and the uses to which the voluntary contributions of the members are put will be made to the International Executive Board.

"The voluntary contributions to the Political Action Fund shall be collected as follows:

"One Dollar and Twenty Cents ($1.20) of each March and August's per capita payment to the International Union shall be diverted to the Political Action Fund where it will be used in connection with federal, state and local elections. These deductions are suggestions only, and individual members are free to contribute more or less than that guideline suggests. The diverted funds will be contributed only on behalf of those members who voluntarily permit that portion of their per capita payment to be used for that purpose. The Tied Officers may suspend the March diversion if, in their judgment, the financial condition of the International warrants suspension.

"For three consecutive months prior to each diversion each dues paying member of the union shall be advised of his/her right to withhold the One Dollar and Twenty Cents ($1.20) payment or any portion thereof otherwise made in March and August. Those members expressing such a desire, on a form provided by the International Union, shall be sent a check in the amount of One Dollar and Twenty Cents ($1.20) or less if they so desire, in advance of the member making his/her dues payment to the local union for the month in which the diversion occurs.

"Those members who do not wish to have any portion of their per capita payment diverted to the Political Action Fund, but wish to make political contributions directly to either the Political Action Fund or their local union, may do so in any amounts whenever they wish."

☐ No contribution - I do not wish to contribute to the ILWU Political Action Fund. I understand that the International will send me a check in the amount of $1.20 prior to March 1, 1993.

☐ Less than $1.20 - I wish to contribute less than the minimum voluntary contribution of $1.20 to the ILWU Political Action Fund. I understand that the International will send me a check for the difference between my contribution and $1.20 prior to March 1, 1993.

☐ More than $1.20 - I wish to contribute more than the minimum voluntary contribution of $1.20 to the ILWU Political Action Fund. Enclosed please find my check for $_.

Signature

Name

Address

City, St.

Return to: ILWU, 1185 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

NOTE: CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NOT DEDUCTIBLE AS CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

IU Southern California members invite you to whale watch—at a discount

Catalina Island, CA. — Members of the Islandboatmen's Union, marine division of the ILWU, are inviting other ILWU and ILWU members to come aboard Catalina Cruises, the only unionized whale-watching boats in the Southern California area.

The season starts on New Year's Day, 1993. The discount card on this page gives you a chance to support your fellow union members at a reasonable price—and have a great time, too.

Catalina Cruises' boats are stable, floating observation stations, piloted by the same union crews that make year-round cruises between Catalina Island and Long Beach. The upper deck, the highest vantage point, will give you a full 360-degree panoramic view. Large picture windows on the lower levels enable you to see all the action whether inside or out.

Inside, snacks and beverages can be enjoyed in the open seating lounge areas.

The crew and knowledgeable speakers from the Cabrillo Marine Museum will narrate during the 3-hour cruise, giving fascinating background and historical information to help you understand the mysterious underwater world of the whale. The experience of your first whale sighting is exhilarating. You'll probably want to return again and again. So, come on out for a day of fun and education, and support your union, too.

Pensioners elect new officers, seek members

Southern California Pensioners Group members elected the following officers for 1992: President, Lou Lorraine; first vice-president, Nate DiBiasi; second vice-president, George Bowers; secretary-treasurer, Pete Grassi; recording secretary, Dick Jones. All committees and executive board members are the same.

SCPG invites all retired members of all locals of the ILWU in the Southern California area to join. The yearly dues for this group are $12.00. Members include clerks, longshoremen, linesmen, warehousemen, fishermen, borax miners, ILWU and any ILWU member. The monthly meeting is the first Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., at the Longshore Hall, 205 West "C" Street, Wilmington.
ILWU MasterCard. A no annual fee credit card with a 11 percent interest rate is one of the lowest rates in the nation. This means savings of over $150 versus other cards. For an application call 1-800-727-3348.

Union Member Mortgage. Makes buying a home or refinancing a mortgage easier by taking applications over the phone. Special help for first-time home buyers also is offered. Call 1-800-327-4349 for lawyers near you.

Legal Service. A discount mail-service pharmacy that offers significant savings on prescriptions for members' whole families, including relatives who live outside the home. To join, call 1-800-327-4349.

Travel Plus Club. Helps members meet the rising cost of travel with 5 percent cash back on all domestic airfares for a low $29 annually. To join, call 1-800-522-8727.

Consumer Discounts. Savings on eyeglasses from Pearle, union-made tires and service from Firestone Tire and Service Centers, discounts from North American Van Lines and more.

These benefits are in addition to and separate from those contained in ILWU collective bargaining agreements. Call only the phone numbers listed for information. Do not call the Benefit Plans Office.

ILWU Union Privilege programs available to members and their families include:

- ILWU MasterCard, a no annual fee credit card with a low 11 percent Annual Percentage Rate — one of the lowest rates in the nation. This means savings of over $150 versus other cards. For an application call 1-800-727-3348.

- Union Member Mortgage. Makes buying a home or refinancing a mortgage easier by taking applications over the phone. Special help for first-time home buyers also is offered. Call 1-800-327-4349 for lawyers near you.


- Loan Program. This new ILWU benefit offers education loans and personal loans with long terms and low rates for affordable monthly payments. Call 1-800-343-7979.

The ILWU has joined this program with other AFL-CIO unions, representing 14 million workers nationwide. That kind of clout gets us benefits and services not available to the general public. The process is a lot like negotiating a contract. We are using the collective strength of the labor movement to improve the standard of living for the people we represent.

Unique Advantages

Among ILWU Union Privilege's unique union-tailored pluses: financial help for members who are unable to meet their monthly ILWU Union Member Mortgage payment due to a prolonged strike, layoff or disability; strike-related "skip payment" provisions on the life insurance, loan and MasterCard programs; and "open credit" on prescription purchases during union-sanctioned strikes over 30 days.

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