Season's Greetings
from the International

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Assistant
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Have a Happy and Safe New Year!

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PRÉSIDENT'S REPORT

New Era, Same Challenge

BY BRIAN McWILLIAMS
ILWU International President

We are on the brink of a new era in world commerce. Congress has approved the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); technological advances in the maritime industry are making it possible for both shippers and ports to increase productivity and profits, more and more companies are expanding into the global market place; international cargo is expected to triple by the year 2020; and from all of this, work opportunities for longshoremen are likely to increase.

So, how come the ILWU isn't celebrating? Because we don't function in a vacuum. The ILWU has held Wobbly motto: "An injury to one is an injury to all." It has been the guiding principle of this union for sixty years. So, when we hear all these cheery predictions of prosperity, we wonder: Who will really benefit? We're the working people of the world share in these new-found riches? Or will they continue to be mere pawns in the pursuit of corporate profit?

For example, I take no comfort in the much-heralded "strategic alliances" among shippers in the Pacific trades. These space-share agreements, such as those between APL and OOCL, may be a boon to the bottom line, but in the wake they leave behind the US Merchant Marine who helped build the American shipping industry. Is this right? Is this fair? I don't think so.

There's a similar scenario shaping up now that the Clinton Administration has given APL the green light to flag-out on routes between US and foreign ports. APL will continue to get all the benefits American law affords American shippers, such as cargo preference and military cargo, but they won't have to employ American crews. Consequently, APL can have its cake and eat it too—and US seamen won't even get the crumbs.

The ILWU International Executive Board views these developments very seriously. At our meeting earlier this month, the Board adopted a Statement of Policy supporting the US Merchant Marine and opposing shippers that undermine them. The Board rightly sees the shipping industry's tactics for what they are: a means to maximize profits at the expense of working people.

Shippers will make their alliances, agreements and other arrangements, but we will hold true to our own. Our bonds with our union and our families and their standard of living. Our mission as a union of conscience demands it.

Make no mistake: the ILWU is not against trade. We are, after all, an international union whose core membership relies on it. But we believe that will be the case. Whatever the future of trade portends, I hope we can all work together to capitalize on the positive and minimize the negative. The ILWU will hold Wobbly motto: "An injury to one is an injury to all."
of the Americas in Miami to promote economic integration, free trade, and democracy in the hemisphere through this new FTAA. But human rights, labor rights, and environmental rights aren’t on the agenda; they were yanked at the insistence of key Latin American leaders like Jimmy Carter, President of Mexico, the high-pressure politicians of the US Congress’ new conservative majority.

Also excluded from the Summit table was the Cuban government, led by Fidel Castro. This has nothing to do with trade, human and labor rights, or political systems. It has everything to do with politics. The ILWU has long opposed US interference and subversion in the international affairs of Cuba. By refusing to recognize and trade with Cuba, the US continues to human development.

For these reasons and more a consensus is building among American workers to slow down the fast-track movement toward freer trade unless the trade partners are committed to deal with social issues that confront workers worldwide in the emerging global economy.

They are supported by key Congressional Democrats, who have insisted labor law reform and mechanisms be incorporated in any future trade agreement in the hemisphere. Republican leaders, on the other hand, have consistently opposed any trade agreement that includes labor and environmental rights.

For this time it’s life for movement to up the ante in this new political alignment. Instead of linking labor rights to the FTAA, we should insist that a strong hemispheric Human and Labor Rights Agreement be in place and implemented before pursuing a hemispheric trade agreement.

Many of you who actively opposed GATT expressed concern that it would place international trade on a higher level than sustainable human development. By demanding a social agenda preceding trading agreements in the Americas, the ILWU would be unmistakably clear as to our values of upholding human dignity above all else.

We will need your help in gaining support for a hemispheric Human and Labor Rights Agreement that truly benefits workers. Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information on these rapidly changing developments, or to help in building coalitions to advocate for sustainable human development in the Americas.

STMTS OF POLICY

The following Statements of Policy were adopted by the ILWU International Executive Board, meeting at International Headquarters in San Francisco, December 8-9, 1994.

Political Action

In the aftermath of the November 8 general election, questions are being asked, “What happened, why did it happen and what do we do now?” We’re not alone. Public interest groups representing the poor, the old, the sick, the children and the infirm have the same questions. We all recognize that a Republican-dominated Congress controlled by an increasingly virulent right-wing will not only block our efforts to improve our lives but institute measures that are shaping up to be the most anti-worker yet.

We fell short as union members. We didn’t heed our union’s advice. Many of us even hesitated to vote, and, of those who did, far too many deserted some of labor’s strongest allies and elected a Congress that is shaping up to be the most anti-worker yet. Instead of voting in the interests of our contracts and our families that we will never again be led down the path of the weak, we made an inadequate effort to contract with foreign shippers to carry U.S. goods, thereby evading, for at least a portion of the journey, the jurisdiction of American seamen. Thus, under the guise of “strategic alliances,” U.S. shippers have the potential to not only evade work opportunities for Americans but the very laws our nation deemed vital to its strategic and economic interests.

Additionally, American President Lines has persuaded the U.S. Maritime Administration to grant a waiver to operate under foreign flag on certain routes. In doing so, APL retains all the advantages of U.S. status, including cargo preference and military cargo, yet shall no longer be required to employ American seamen on the routes in question.

These “innovations” have only one purpose: to increase the profits of American shippers by abandoning the U.S. Merchant Marine and exploiting the labor of low-wage seamen from abroad.

The ILWU International Executive Board finds these actions deplorable and intolerable. We, therefore, place at the disposal of our brothers and sisters in the U.S. Merchant Marine, particularly those who are members of the Sailors Union of the Pacific, Marine Firemen’s Union, and Masters, Pilots & Pilots’ Union, the full cooperation, support and strength of the ILWU. We stand by them—as we have for generations and as they have for us—in their struggle to preserve justice, jobs and their way of life.
"Organizing, organizing, organizing." The Big O was on everybody's mind as the ILWU International Executive Board met December 8-9 at International Headquarters in San Francisco.

And rightly so. The union faces formidable challenges in nearly every quarter.

Corporate downsizing and plant closures have left thousands of ILWU members out of work, particularly in the warehouse division and in Hawaii's agriculture industry. Multinational trade agreements, such as NAFTA and GATT, promise to erode the union's ranks even further.

Employers are increasingly resorting to union-busting, lock-outs, "permanent replacements" and strike-breaking.

And an extremely unsympathetic Congress, dominated by anti-union Republicans, certainly won't be much help in labor's efforts to protect workers' interests through labor law reform, health care reform, health and safety reform and the like.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The solution, the ILWU's new International Program: a two-part centralized organizing program that aims to yield organizing gains in both the immediate and the long-range future.

The "short range program is designed to supplement ongoing projects in those areas where locals and IBU regions are committed to doing everything possible to assist and participate in organizing," the NOC said. "The long-range program is designed to generate the funds necessary to carry on the short range program and increase the union's ability to take on more projects and larger targets by developing lead organizers and strong local programs."

"To reach short-term goals, the NOC is prepared to hire up to three entry-level organizers who will be selected on the basis of their potential to become full-time lead organizers in the future. Consideration will be given to ILWU members in the respective areas and other talented people who meet the criteria developed by the NOC."

Organizing projects will be mutually agreed upon by the NOC and participating locals. Recent reductions in International staff will help defray the International's organizing costs.

The long-range program will build on short range activities and expand the union's organizing infrastructure. Lead organizers are developed or recruited, the ILWU expects to raise the level of organizing objectives, both in terms of target size and number.

FUNDING THE FUND

"The union must gain the ability to conduct one or more large drives, whether large companies, an industry in a given city, or various companies in a geographic area," the NOC emphasized. "There's a glitch, however. The 1994 International Convention did not propose an increase in the International's income: there's no 'new money,' and short-term organizing efforts will rapidly eat up existing funds."

"It is imperative that we have a program backed by sufficient funds to maintain aggressive organizing until our next International Convention," insisted the NOC. "In the interim, we propose an assessment of $2 per month, per member until the 1997 Convention. This assessment will be applicable to all locals except the Canadian Area and Local 142.

"Local 142 in Hawaii recently approved a dues increase at their convention to guarantee sufficient funds to continue their organizing efforts. Canada, as a sovereign area, receives no services from the International."

The NOC detailed their proposal called for a two-part centralized organizing program that aims to yield organizing gains in both the immediate and the long-range future.

"The short range program is designed to supplement ongoing projects in those areas where locals and IBU regions are committed to doing everything possible to assist and participate in organizing," the NOC said. "The long-range program is designed to generate the funds necessary to carry on the short range program and increase the union's ability to take on more projects and larger targets by developing lead organizers and strong local programs."

"To reach short-term goals, the NOC is prepared to hire up to three entry-level

International Secretary-Treasurer Joe Ibarra, left, talks dollars and sense about organizing and other budget items, while President Brian McWilliams reported that the President Leonard Hoshijio pore over the details. IEB member John Toussie (above, center), takes his seat after being sworn in by McWilliams. With him are (clockwise from bottom) Joe Cortez, Robert Barba (partially obscured), Johnna Wong, Bo Lapenia and Nate Lum.

The IEB discussed the proposal at length and voted its enthusiastic support. But the ILWU membership will have the last word. Under the ILWU Constitution, all assessments must be approved by a majority of members casting secret ballots. The International plans to conduct the referendum by mail. More information on procedures will be available after the first of the year. It's anticipated that ballotting will be completed by April.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Organizing was one of two key financial issues addressed by the IEB. The other was the International budget. At the International Convention in April, delegates directed a special Trustees Committee to make necessary adjustments to correct errors. For example, the budget assumed that the Convention would eliminate the office of Vice President for Hawaii (which it didn't) and failed to reflect the costs of adding two members to the IEB.

Trustees Frank Billeci (Local 34), Nick Buckles (Local 32), Joe Cortez (Local 13) and Johnna Wong (Local 142) met just before the IEB convened this month to do just that. In their report, they unanimously recommended adoption of a revised budget prepared by the new IEB members. "It more accurately reflects the actual expenditures," approved by convention delegates. The IEB agreed.

The board's business continued with reports from the International Officers detailing their activities since taking office four months ago. "We've been extremely busy," said International President Brian McWilliams. But, in many ways, the transition hasn't been "hard because all the new officers came in with extensive experience."

Confronting budgetary constraints head on, the Officers eliminated the International Rep at-Large position and the International Department staff, and replaced the former Southern California Regional Director position with an organizer. An International Rep position in Hawaii remains vacant for the time being.

Political action resources were put to the test in the 1994 elections; unfortunately, many ILWU-backed candidates were swept away by a conservative tide. Towboat safety, health care and maritime reform dominated the union's legislative agenda; the union also lobbied against GATT. The International is putting in motion an education program that includes oral histories, a video, educational materials, seminars and more. Internal and external organizing will be enhanced by new brochures explaining the union's philosophy, goals and benefits of the ILWU.
IEB Members Answer...

What's Your New Year's Wish for the ILWU?

Greater unity and communication to further the growth of our great union.

John Tousseau
Local 63, Marine Clerks
Southern California Region

I'd like to see our membership increase so that we can be a strong union again—which means we need to organize, organize, organize!

Lawrence Thibeaux
Local 15, Longshore
Northern California Region

That we organize more people than we lose. I hope we keep up our membership, work in unity and follow our motto: An injury to one is an injury to all.

Brian Tanaka
Local 142, General Trades
Hawaii Region

I wish for the membership to rally around the ILWU leadership to gain the most strength we can muster.

John Bukoskey
Local 200
Alaska Region

More organizing of new members and internal organizing of existing members. More communication with the people inside and outside.

Vicente Arista
Local 142, Pineapple
Hawaii Region

I want more members brought into this organization. We've got to increase our ranks to keep the ILWU strong.

Robert Barba
Local 142, Sugar
Hawaii Region

What can I say about a doomed industry? I hope our sugar members get into other industries and get some decent ILWU jobs.

Luisa Gratz
Local 26, Warehouse
Southern California Region

No more layoffs, no more poverty and no more hardship. I want ILWU to continue to be strong, with the kind of rank-and-file participation on every level that made us a great union.

That we grow, that we prosper, and that everybody is happy.

Joe Cortez
Local 13, Longshore
Southern California Region

I want us to stay unified, no matter what our problems; good health for our pensioners and all our members; and more longshore registration in the new year.

Dave Freiboth
National Office
Inlandboatmen's Union
Open season on Neuts!

Johanna Wong
Local 142, Tourism
Hawaii Region

Registration, registration, registration!

Pat Vukich
Local 19, Longshore
Puget Sound Region

Members!

Gordie Westrand
National Office
Canadian Area

Greater unity and communication to further the growth of our great union.

John Tousseau
Local 63, Marine Clerks
Southern California Region
Pete Grassi's quote: "We'd like to have our gang back."
ILWU grain pacts ‘a hell of a victory’

ILWU longshore Locals in the Pacific Northwest have ratified grain agreements with both the Pacific Maritime Association and the Pacific Northwest Grain Elevator Operators after two months of intense negotiations.

It was a hell of a victory,” said Coast Committee member Glen Ramiskey, who chaired the negotiating committee. “If our locals hadn’t been united, it wouldn’t have happened.”

Looming large in the union’s talks was the specter of the ILWU’s ongoing dispute with the Peavey Grain Company, which is not a party to either of the contracts. Last year, after reneging twice on tentative agreements with the ILWU, Peavey unilaterally implemented a new contract at its Kalama, Wa., facility. Bringing in security guards, video cameras and scabs, and threatening to fire anyone who refused to cross ILWU picket lines (even though there weren’t any), Peavey slashed grain loading jobs under longshore Local 21 and transferred to nonunion supervisors the paperwork duties of ILWU “super cargoes” represented by Local 40.

So far, the ILWU’s high-heat campaign against Peavey hasn’t persuaded the company to reason—a fact which certainly didn’t escape the attention of PMA’s grain employers and stevedores.

We pulled a rabbit out of the hat,” reflected ILWU International President Brian McWilliams. “We united our members. We kept our contracts intact. We averted a strike. We gave a little, but we got much more in return.”

“Glen Ramiskey and Ole Olsen gave 100 percent and got the new Coast Committee off to a terrific start,” McWilliams added. “International Vice President Rich Austin invaluable expertise and assistance. And our negotiators were simply excellent.”

PILE BILL & COUNTING

Olsen made a point of thanking “the very talented people from our Northwest Locals who did overwhelming volumes of hard work. Their efforts made it possible for us to increase our bill over $3 million in gains during the life of the contract.”

“Hill in all,” McWilliams added, “I’d say there’s plenty of congratulations due all round.”

During contract talks, the union insisted on severance pay for workers laid off due to technological advances. The Port agreed to one week’s pay per year of service but wanted to layoff from the bottom of the seniority roster. Local 9, Hutter said, was determined to give senior workers the option.

“We’ve got an aging work force. We figured that people near retirement could save some money and have a nice nest egg—and let the junior people keep working,” Hutter recalled. “The Port finally came around. Their thinking was that the more senior employees get better benefits—vacation, sick leave, that kind of thing—and maybe aren’t as fast on their feet as they are now. So the Port was satisfied, senior employees would also be required to provide retraining, discuss the impact of automation with workers, and provide all necessary information.

Hutter doesn’t fear that modernization will eventually lead to a workerless warehouse. There’s still a lot of work that requires human hands.”

Even the Local 9 contract, the first to 21st Century technology hasn’t all been that encouraging. In fact, “it’s pretty scary.”
Trask honored

KAANAPALI, HI.—About 350 people gathered October 29 at the Westin Maui Resort & Spa to celebrate the Chair's 25th anniversary. The event, called the "Aloha for Harry," featured a variety of performances and speakers honoring Harry Bridges and Trask, the retired organizer and labor leader who served as the first director of the chair.

Trask retired on August 1, 1994, upon reaching the 65-year term as ILWU International Vice President (Hawaii). He had served 32 of his 40 years in the ILWU as a worker at both the Local and International levels.

On October 29, ILWU International President Independent, Bill Garretson and President/Mainland Richard Austin, Vice President/Hawaii Leonard Ibarra sent Trask this message: "On behalf of the International, we extend our recognition of your achievements and wishes you all the best on your well-deserved retirement.

"For 30 years, you have given generously of your time and talents, repeatedly going above and beyond to become Regional Director and, later, International Vice President for Hawaii. With decades of service behind you, we are now proud to see you enjoy the fruits of your labor on behalf of your union and the labor movement, you will surely be counted among the many Locals leaders whose contributions serve as shining examples to generations of ILWU members to come.

"Congratulations on your retirement, Tommy. You've earned it!"

U.W. budget ax misses Bridges labor studies

SEATTLE—The Harry Bridges Chair for Labor Studies at the University of Washington will continue to exist and, "thank you very much, even though "a dark cloud of program terminations hangs over the UW," said Louise Brown, chair of the Harry Bridges Chair.

Although the University has slated entire departments for elimination and will abolish over 200 faculty and staff positions, "not one thin dime, and not a single department for elimination and none of the Harry Bridges Chair money can be touched." said Brown.

"The University makes it clear that the University has an agenda to cut costs. The University has a significant deficit in its budget and it is looking for ways to cut costs. The University has also announced that it will make deep cuts across the board, affecting not only the Harry Bridges Chair, but also other programs and departments. The University has stated that it will continue to make cuts until it has eliminated its deficit."

Tribute to UFW's Vera Cruz brings back memories of Filipino labor struggle

BY DAVID BACON

OAKLAND, Ca.—Pete Velasco, retired secretary-treasurer of the United Farm Workers, and Abba Rambos, ILWU International Representative, were featured speakers at the memorial service for revered labor leader Philip Vera Cruz, held November 19 at the ILWU warehouse Local 6 Hall.

Both Vera Cruz and Velasco came to the US during the 1920s, part of the first wave of Filipino immigrants to the mainland. This generation, who in later years were affectionately and respectfully called monangs or Filipinos, included many labor organizers and heroes, among them Chris Mendoza, a capable organizer of the Agbayani Village. Vera Cruz left the UFW in 1975, and became a vocal critic of the Marcos dictatorship, a lasting memorial to Harry Bridges.

At the memorial, Rameb remembered Vera Cruz "as a labor leader in the truest sense—someone who was a fighter and a fieldhand, who never stopped pursuing fairness, justice and equality. Like other Filipino immigrants of his generation, he was a child of US colonialism. Today, with measures like Proposition 187, we are still children of colonialism, and when we remember Philip, we should remember that he would have continued this fight against it with all of his strength."

Dockers, widows on pension list

SAN FRANCISCO—Following is the December 1994 listing of dockers retired under various ILWU-IBU pension plans.

Local 4, Vancouver: James E. Forbes; Local 8, Portland: Frank D. Morgan (Emerson); Bruce G. Phillips, Benedict A. Stutzer; Local 10, San Francisco: Sun Yee Ang, Everlo Chapel. Lawrence Fuentes, Salvatore Gallo, Leroy Griffin, Hector Palma; Local 20, Seattle: William Pinkston; Local 12, North Bend: Albert D. Hansen; Local 13, Wimington: Rayford L. Hamilton, Thomas R. Workman; Local 19, Seattle: Charles E. Calkins; Local 23, Tacoma: Carl J. Engels, Robert L. Grant.


The widows are: Local 4, Vancouver: Dorothy T. Bozin; Local 8, Portland: Marcella M. Piwarchuck (William); Local 10, San Francisco: Jerry D. Avila (Martin); Mary Battaglia (Anthony); Ellen Capiti (Dennis); Aurora M. Delgado, Katherine A. Ley Y. Nett (Milton); Dolores G. Roya (Fred); Local 13, Wilmington: Oleg Brook (Robert); Mirna Gutierrez (Peter); Roselyne T. Tsubota (Mirko); Local 23, Tacoma: Eureka; Helen Arthur (Willard).

Local 19, Seattle: Margaret Campbell (Harry); Ida D. Hammond (Albert); Local 34, San Francisco: Frances Noguchi (Shigeru); Lois E. Pala (Philip); Local 39, Seattle: Beatrice J. Keiser (Theodore); Velma M. White (Robert); Local 54, Stockton: Vera C. Michael (Charles); Local 63, Wilmington: Lydia E. Faria (Albert Faria Jr); Estella Lucille (Anthony); Lucia A. Brandao (G); Local 92, Portland: Louise F. Smith (Earl); Local 98, Federal Way: William M. Juran (Marvin).

Names in brackets are those of deceased husbands.

Workshops, music, exhibits at Labor Heritage Festival

SAN FRANCISCO—The 9th annual Western Workers Labor Heritage Festival will be held January 25-30 at the Langan Center, 1511 South of San Francisco Airport. The festival features a variety of workshops, music and exhibits highlighting labor culture. It begins in honor of Dr. King weekend to build the labor movement through the artistic expression and debate. Registration fees include meals and rooms: $485 per person in a double and $595 for a single. Call the Center at 303-431-6400 for a complete brochure.