THE CENSUS BUREAU REPORTS MORE PEOPLE FALLING INTO POVERTY.

THE INCOMES OF WORKING PEOPLE CONTINUE TO PLUMMET.

THE RICHEST 20% OWN 50% OF ALL INCOME.

February is Black History Month. We honor it whether the Republicans like it or not.

Paul Robeson • Mumia Abu-Jamal
Rebecca King-Morrow
Oral Histories • Books • Film • TV
And More!

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Working Harder for Less

Ever get the feeling you’re going backwards?
You’re not alone. See page 5.

Equality means equal jobs, voting and opportunity.

Human Rights Day, San Francisco, 1963
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL ILWU/IBU MEMBERS

On February 16 we will be mailing you a ballot so that you can vote on a $2 monthly assessment, which, if approved, will be a responsible thing to do.

When we took our oaths of office last July, we recognized that you—the rank-and-file members of this Union—placed your trust in our hands. Trust is a lot of things, but above all it’s telling the truth: no matter how tough the truth may be, you’re entitled to hear it from us. So here it is.

Without your financial support for organizing, we will be unable to offset or stop the rapid and disturbing losses of membership we’ve experienced over the last two decades. The ILWU/IBU is not unique in this regard. Plant closures, layoffs, automation, and union-busting have taken their toll among practically every private sector union in the United States. We can blame Congress. We can blame Corporate America. But, ultimately, the responsibility to reverse this trend lies with us, and the only means we have to accomplish that is through organizing new members.

What does organizing mean to you? Plenty.

Organizing means good contracts. It’s no secret that almost every time we go to the bargaining table it’s just that much harder to get you the wages, benefits and working conditions you deserve. Even employers who don’t resort to high-priced union-busters (and many of them do) frequently demand concessions from us to match low-wage, nonunion competitors. The more we organize, the more we beat back the attacks on our own contracts.

Organizing means secure families. You might have a good union contract, but what about other members of your family? With more and more families requiring two or more wage earners, wouldn’t yours be better off if everyone had the benefits of a union contract? Of course!

Organizing means a higher standard of living. It’s no accident that the standard of living for American workers has declined right along with the level of unionization. Recent studies show that the greater the percentage of union population, the better the wages and quality of jobs for all workers. Sadly, in the last two years, workers who lost good-paying jobs with benefits ended up in jobs paying an average of 23 percent less, with fewer or no benefits. Only organizing can turn that around.

Organizing means stronger communities. There is no escaping the link between economic power in the work place and the viability of the communities in which we live. As wages decline, the tax base erodes, the gap between rich and poor grows and, with it, the problems of society. The more financially secure our communities, the better our schools, community services, and way of life.

Organizing means clout. The more members we have, the more support we have when push comes to shove—and it frequently does. Whether negotiating contracts, organizing new units, lobbying for legislation, taking a stand for health and safety, or launching strikes or boycotts, we are only able to do so effectively because we have the full force and strength of the ILWU/IBU membership behind us—and the bosses and politicians know it.

Organizing means better union services and programs. Whether they have 5 members or 5,000, all ILWU/IBU units are entitled to draw from the resources of the International for help in organizing, bargaining, health and safety, research, education, political action, communications and other vital activities. The International is also charged with fulfilling the mandates of ILWU Convention action, as voted by delegates you elect to represent you. The more members we have, the greater the pool of funding for resources, services and programs you want, need and deserve.

For all of these reasons and more, delegates to the 1994 Convention—from every segment of our union—unanimously voted their enthusiastic support for stepped-up organizing of new members. These delegates came to the Convention with proposals formulated at Local meetings by Local members; they discussed and debated them; they voted their conscience; and, finally, they turned over to the new Titled Officers the task of following through.

Taking your delegates’ lead, we explored every avenue at our disposal to come up with an organizing plan that fulfills the mandate of the Convention. We cut costs, reduced staff, consolidated activities and froze International Officers’ wages to make more funds available for organizing. When that wasn’t enough, we went back to the Locals for more input on how we could best achieve organizing objectives.

Armed with the Convention mandate and additional input, we prepared the organizing plan that was approved by the International Executive Board in December. That plan is before you now. In sum, it sets short-term organizing goals to help get a foot in the door, and long-term goals for sustained growth; it calls for the training and hiring of organizers; it targets for organizing key areas and industries in Southern California, Northern California, Oregon, Puget Sound and Alaska; and, last but not least, it requires a contribution from you: $2 a month for 24 months—less than 7 cents a day, less than 50 cents a week.

We do not make this request lightly. It is, quite bluntly, an action of last resort. Essentially, what began with you ends with your International Officers and Executive Board members, your Convention delegates, your Local leaders, and your voice. We do not make this request lightly.

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We do not make this request lightly. It is, quite bluntly, an action of last resort. Essentially, what began with you ends with you. From your Local, to your delegates, to your Convention members, your voice has dictated our course at every level. Your voice, and yours alone, can decide the ILWU’s future—and yours—for years to come. And when you cast your ballot, your voice will speak volumes with just one word. Let that word be “Yes.”

In Solidarity,
Jeff Andrade, Vice President
Local 20-A, Processing/Packaging
We need to organize; our union is getting smaller and smaller, and unionism is getting smaller and smaller. We need to do everything we can, because unions keep the standard of living in America up high—and that’s where we need to stay.

Everett Burdan, Business Agent
Local 17, Warehouse
Those of us in the trenches who have been trying to organize for the last few years know the intense frustration of the process. The employers have most of the legal—and illegal—weapons on their side to stifle an organizing drive. The last thing we need is inadequate staff and resources to answer their onslaught.

I urge you all to vote yes on the upcoming assessment, to give your union the funds to start the second “March Inland.” How can we hope to organize the unorganized if we just talk about it?

Let’s do it!

Richard Gurtiza, Director
Region 37, IBU Marine Division
Organizing is the lifeblood of any union. If we don’t organize we’ll die on the vine. Right now, over 95% of the seafood industry is non-union. Unless we organize and build our strength in the industry, every contract negotiation, every step toward fair treatment, will be an uphill battle.

We have to look at the big picture. The future of our union depends on successful organizing.

Gary Harvey, President
Local 20-A, Processing/Packaging
There are two main reasons why a union works. One is solidarity, and the other is numbers. But in recent years, throughout the ILWU, and basically because of greedy employers, we’ve seen our numbers drop as a result of corporate downsizing and job consolidation. There’s strength in numbers, and that’s why I’m 100% behind the assessment. I’m hoping my Local and all the other Locals get behind it as well.

Mike Henry, Longshore Caucus Delegate
Local 34, Ship Clerks
I believe we can’t do enough to participate in our union’s organizing efforts, especially in the Warehouse Division, because our strength as a whole is in direct proportion to our membership.

Terry Mast, Secretary-Treasurer
National Office, IBU Marine Division
Committting ourselves to a strong organizing program is one of the most important things we can do as a union. More than any other factor, our strength is in our ability to grow, to enlarge our ranks in our industries.

The International Organizing Program is the best way to ensure that the resources needed to successfully organize are available to all Locals and Regions. In the long run, the cost of not organizing—and losing what we have worked so hard for—is much greater than this organizing assessment could ever be.

Jerry Rich, President
Local 63, Office Clericals
The Longshore Division is the strength and the linchpin of the ILWU. With their support, organizing in other Divisions will be vital to the growth and future of the ILWU.

Organizing is paramount to all of our survival. We must do this vigorously, right through the next century.

Carl Van Wy, Executive Board Member
Local 20-A, Processing/Packaging
I support the assessment, and our Local supports it. It gives us a head start. It’s a good idea. Management has its own ideas: downsizing, modernization and computerization. We need to be a jump ahead of them.

We need to organize more and better. If it takes more money, then that’s what we have to do.

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CRUNCHING NUMBERS

Feeling squeezed? No wonder! Recent studies say you're not alone.

As unionization declines, living standards decline

Percent of U.S. workforce unionized vs. average weekly earnings in 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weekly Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$449.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$363.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Labor

Wages, unionization fall in tandem

There's no escaping the conclusion: As the rate of unionization declines, so does workers' standards of living.

Over the twenty-year period 1972-1992, unionization fell from 26.4 per cent of the U.S. work force to 15.8 per cent. Meanwhile, average wages for all workers fell from $449.40 to $363.95 a week.

Even as the Clinton Administration is taking bows for a lower unemployment rate and a general upswing in the economy, the trend continues. An abundance of white-collar jobs have been created but mostly in the lower-paid service industries—along with plenty of low-wage service and clerical positions. What's more, pay hikes for existing jobs still aren't outpacing inflation. The result is that average real wages continue to fall for blue-collar workers and remain stubbornly low among the poor and unskilled.

The estimated 7.6 million workers who permanently lost their jobs from 1991 to 1993, only 31.4 per cent of nonunion workers are single, looking for developments in future issues of The Dispatcher. Dispatchers versus average weekly earnings in 1992 $449.40

Richer richer, poor poorer

Surgences in employment and the economy have not helped the poor. Despite more jobs, the U.S. had 1.3 million more people living in poverty during 1993 than in 1992.

Meanwhile, the rich were having a field day. The top-earning 20 per cent of households had nearly half (48.3 per cent) of all income in 1993, up from 45.3 per cent from 1992. And the top-earning 5 per cent took 20 per cent of the income, also up 1.3 per cent.

The bottom fifth of households, however, earned just 3.6 per cent of all income in 1993, down from 3.9 per cent in 1992.

1993 was the fourth year in a row that the number of American poor increased. Children accounted for 40 per cent of those in poverty. A distinct trend is that only 27 per cent of the population.

Workers want more control—and unions!

Direct and effective employee involvement in workplace decisions, a vast majority of workers believe, would not only improve the quality of their jobs but the corporate bottom line. Even still, they don't think that management will give them the power to make decisions.

That might explain why 40 per cent of nonunion workers want to say "Union YES!" Unfortunately, 66 per cent of workers believe they can't organize without big hassles from management.

And here's a surprising response from workers say they don't want unions: They want an independent voice in everything from training and technology use to health and safety issues and benefits; and they don't want managers appointing worker representatives, dominating the process and having the last word in disputes.

Sure sounds like a union to us!

Numbers from the Dunlop Commission

- Proportion of U.S. employers who have illegally fired at least one worker during an organizing campaign: 1 in 4
- Average back pay award for an illegally fired worker who is often out of work a year (and every other year): $2,749
- Proportion of employers who engage in bad faith "surface bargaining" with newly certified unions: 1 in 3
- A conservative estimate of the number of non-union workers currently "may want (union) representation" but are unable to get it: 15,000,000.

Reps use Dunlop Report to resuscitate company unions

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A group of 21 Republicans and two Democrats are pushing legislation that would undo decades of labor law forbidding non-union employers from sponsoring management-dominated employee involvement groups that give workers the illusion of having a say in the work place without the benefits of union protection.

The Teamwork for Employees and Managers Act of 1995, its backers claim, will give companies the "competitive edge" they need to compete in the global marketplace. The broad agenda, of course, is to thwart union organizing.

DUNLOPSIDED

The announcement, made by House and Senate Republicans on January 31, came on the heels of the long-awaited report of the Dunlop Commission, set up by the Clinton Administration to study and evaluate the state of the American work force and labor/management relations. Among other things, the Commission cited the downward spiral in wages, "an increasing underclass of low paid labor," and widespread violations by employers of workers' rights to organize.

The new Republican majority, however, chose to ignore those findings and instead focus on portions of the report indicating that employee involvement groups should not be illegal simply because they involve discussions of wages and working conditions, and as long as the discussions are "incidental to the broad purposes of these programs."

Since the 1930s, federal labor laws have banned employers from establishing "company unions" or other bogus in-house organizations that usurp or circumvent the legitimate role of real unions to bargain wages, rules and working conditions. With the advent of equally bogus "employee involvement" teams in the 1980s, the law was put to the test, and the National Labor Relations Board consistently declared such groups illegal—despite employer claims that the groups were intended only to "improve productivity, efficiency and labor-management relations."

Crossing the Line

Echoing employer pleadings before the NLRB, sponsors of the bill say it would interfere "with the legitimate collective bargaining but would be, as touted by the pro-business Journal of Commerce, "largely aimed at improving company competitiveness." It hasn't yet been made clear, however, just how "flexible" these changes would be improved without workers and management getting down to the nitty gritty of wages, rules and working conditions. In nonunion groups dominated by management, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find out when legal boundaries are crossed.

What the legislation is expected to kick off this month. Watch for developments in future issues of The Dispatcher.

4-hour work week on GOP's hit list

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the cornerstone of the 40-hour week, overtime rules and compensatory time regulations, is on the target list developed by some Republican House members who are determined to attack the nation's labor laws.

Legislation to put the principles of the 40-hour week and time and a half for overtime is expected to be introduced. The bill is expected to be modeled on proposals developed by the Labor Policy Institute (LIPA), a business advocacy group to which the National Labor Relations Board consistently declared such groups illegal—despite employer claims that the groups were intended only to "improve productivity, efficiency and labor-management relations."

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February 10, 1995 Page 5 The DISPATCHER

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Paul Robeson gets his due

World famous artist, activist for world civil rights, and star of a 1940s movie about the world, Robeson had made his mark as an outstanding college scholar and athlete at Rutgers University in New Jersey, from which he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1919. He was regarded as Rutgers' finest athlete ever, demonstrating amazing skill and earning letters in football, baseball, basketball and track. Robert Casciola, Executive Director of the National Football Foundation, called Robeson "one of the great players of his time."

But in the early 1970s, when Robeson was first nominated by Rutgers to the College Football Hall of Fame, the 12-member "honors court" rejected him. "They just didn't think Robeson was worthy because of what they thought was his communist sympathies, if not his communism," former Rutgers Sports Information Director Bob Smith told Associated Press. "It was a very conservative group. You couldn't criticize your country with them."

MOTHER OF CONTROVERSY

Paul Robeson was accustomed to being the center of controversy. Although he earned a law degree from Columbia University in 1923, Robeson was drawn to the performing arts, in which he was an accomplished actor, a remarkable singer, worked in theater and radio, and traveled overseas. But he never forgot his roots: his father was a former slave who ran away from a North Carolina plantation at age 15; his mother was a Philadelphia school teacher whose forebears had worked in the "underground railroad" to help slaves escape to the north.

His travels took him to Europe in the 1930s, where he helped British, Soviet, Welch and Irish workers get record turnouts for union meetings. He performed in workingmen's pubs and dance halls to get out the union messages. The对企业 had learned he was attacked by Hitler's storm troopers. He was imprisoned for his communism, if not his communism, government revoked his passport in 1950 because he was "meddling in foreign affairs." He responded: "That's too bad. I'm going to keep on meddling."

Although the Supreme Court forced the State Department to reinstate Robeson's passport in 1958, the intervening years had been tough. He was attacked by Hitler's storm troopers. He remained as stalwart in his convictions as ever, but his health was in decline, even as he was enthusiastically received on his return trip to Europe. The time he came back to the US in 1963, his voice was gone and the degenerative circulatory ailment which would eventually kill him had returned him to a shadow of himself.

Paul Robeson spent his remaining years, quietly living in his sister's home in Philadelphia. When he died in 1976, his son spoke at the memorial in his father's honor. "He knew the price he would have to pay and he paid it unshamed and unflinchingly."

Trials of a Political Prisoner

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. A former Black Panther member, and an award-winning journalist, he has become known as "the voice of the voiceless."

In the early morning hours of December 9, 1981, Jamal was working as a cab driver when he saw his brother Billy being beaten by police officer Daniel Faulkner. Jamal got out of his cab and took a near-fatal bullet in the stomach. Shortly after, police arrived on the scene to find him sitting on the curb bleeding and Faulkner shot dead.

Frank Rizzo, by protesting and writing about the ongoing harassment and defamation of the African American activist by Philadelphia police. At a 1978 press conference Rizzo denounced the "new breed of journalism" and threatened retaliation.

Since his trial, Jamal has remained on death row; the Supreme Court has refused to hear his appeal, despite the questionable circumstances of his trial, including unfair jury selection, withholding of evidence, denial of counsel and other irregularities.

ILWU PROTESTS

On February 25, the Partisan Defense Committee will sponsor a meeting fund raiser for Jamal and other political prisoners at the Local 6 Hall in Oakland. For information, call the Committee at (510) 839-0852.
In observance of Black History Month, this issue will focus on two warehouse Local 6 activists who struggled against racial injustice in the 1940s and 1950s. Curt McClain, the first African American to be elected Local 6 Business Agent and later President, went on to become International Secretary-Treasurer for the union. In 1991, Ole Fagerhaug served the union for many years as a highly respected and effective organizer. Their recollections are strikingly complementary.

Curtis McClain

"They called us the Black Caucus. We called ourselves the Frontiersmen."

In 1946, shortly after I left the military, I was hired on a temporary basis by Schmid Lithograph, a multi-union house in San Francisco. They had a crew of six or seven warehousemen, but they had a total work force of 600. I was the only black then and the person who was to return from the military had an accident, John Munson, the company supervisor, asked me to work steady. He also kind of pissed me off by implying that I would either come late or wouldn't show up. "Don't forget," he said, "we always start at the regular time." I went into the paper seasoning department where work was heavy, hot, and dusty. Although it was the last place I wanted to work, I needed the job, so I stayed for 14 years.

I liked working out of the bell gang, which handled freight cars and trucks. This job paid more money on a straight-time basis, you had an opportunity to work overtime, and you didn't have to deal with the jerky. But when I asked to be sent to the bell gang, I'd be told I was too important to be moved from the paper seasoning department. Someone else would have to do it in your place. But just happen to be white, and would work the bell gang and get the overtime pay.

As I acquired seniority in the plant I tried to get into the trades as an apprentice, but that's where you really encountered the old guard. You didn't get into the lithographers or the printers' union; you didn't get into the electrical department. I saw many people come in, begin an apprenticeship, and become journeymen. I had electrical training, but I was never allowed into the trades.

So I was interested when a Black Caucus developed in 1947. We decided to meet on an informal basis to discuss problems that affected blacks and other minorities in the local. We discussed grievances we thought were not being handled properly. We often heard of people being bypassed for jobs; and at that time you did not find blacks in the vast majority of the good classified categories. There were also certain discharges we felt warranted greater attention from the officers. At least we felt this grievance was not being aired quickly enough. I'm not saying the union did not try to be white, and would work the bell gang and get the overtime pay.

When we formed we had in mind to get organized for political purposes within the union. The term Black Caucus was really a name white trade unionists called us. We were not too upset because they called us a Black Caucus—after all, it was a group of black people coming together to discuss problems. But we constantly called ourselves the Frontiersmen. This is a club we set up so if we were questioned, there would never be any problem, because we sponsored dances and parties. We tied ourselves in with social activities within the community.

Clearly, though, the purpose of the Frontiersmen was to organize so we could elect an Afro-American to a full-time position and address the grievances taking place. I was the person elected as business agent in 1949. But there were appointments—field representatives, organizers—made prior to my being elected when some of the longtimers joined us with the International. The first Afro-American organizer appointed was Roland Corley in the Redwood City division of Local 6. Also, the union began to have shop committees push more for promotions by seniority. This had been union policy all along, but in reality it had not necessarily worked out in the past.

At the time we formed the Frontiersmen Club, it was solely needed within the local. We did a great deal of good, not only for the black union members, but for the union as a whole. We learned some of the fears and concerns of the union members, both black and white. After serving its purpose, there was no need to continue with the organization. It dissolved after 14 years. Things had worked out as they should have, in a more democratic fashion. We were now working together on the job, forming good house committees and a strong steward system, and electing people who were going to work for the whole union.

Ole Fagerhaug

"There is something disgraceful going on that's a danger to all of us."

I made my seniority in 1949 at Owens-Illinois Glass of Oakland. I was elected steward about a year later. We were 150 warehousemen in a plant that had 1400 workers.

In 1946, shortly after I left the military, I was hired on a temporary basis by Schmid Lithograph, a multi-union house in San Francisco. They had a crew of six or seven warehousemen, but they had a total work force of 600. I was the only black there and the person who was to return from the military had an accident, John Munson, the company supervisor, asked me to work steady. He also kind of pissed me off by implying that I would either come late or wouldn't show up. "Don't forget," he said, "we always start at the regular time." I went into the paper seasoning department where work was heavy, hot, and dusty. Although it was the last place I wanted to work, I needed the job, so I stayed for 14 years.

I liked working out of the bell gang, which handled freight cars and trucks. This job paid more money on a straight-time basis, you had an opportunity to work overtime, and you didn't have to deal with the jerky. But when I asked to be sent to the bell gang, I'd be told I was too important to be moved from the paper seasoning department. Someone else would have to do it in your place. But just happen to be white, and would work the bell gang and get the overtime pay.

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OLF FAJERGHAU

"There is something disgraceful going on that's a danger to all of us."

I made my seniority in 1949 at Owens-Illinois Glass of Oakland. I was elected steward about a year later. We were 150 warehousemen in a plant that had 1400 workers. Amongst our 150 members there were three blacks. In the rest of the plant there was one black—in Oakland, a city with a large black population. To explain this I'll give you an example.

I was around the dispatch hall on my day off. This was about 1950. I heard a conversation between our dispatcher and Charlie Kinsey, the personnel manager at Owens. "I need seven men for Monday," Charlie said, "but don't send me any—no blacks." The dispatcher laughed, "Ha, Charlie, I gotta take 'em off the board, but you know you don't have to keep 'em.' That explained everything as far as the warehouse went. And, of course, if they could do that with the Warehouse Union, what could they do with the company-oriented glass blower's union that had much of the rest of the plant?

I got our committee together. There were five of us, including two Hispanics. I said, "There is something disgraceful going on over there. Let's get a program together.

"Now is when we move." I called the dispatcher and asked him if there were any calls for new people. He said, "Yes." I got the committee together and marched over to the personnel office and said, "We are charging a violation of the contract. I pulled out the records I kept for nine months. I said, 'The most recent record is for nine months, and your record from then until now except two Caucasians, and you've got a call in.' "We have a right to do that under the contract," they said. "We can lay anybody off before 90 days." I said, "What a minute. The contract says the company may for any reason lay anybody off prior to seniority. What we want to know is the reason." So they asked the company why.

We got to the third one and Bud Owens interrupted: "Wait a minute, that's enough. We'll take these men." I got on the horn, called the dispatcher, and said, "Where these guys are, pull them off the job and send them out to Owens." They came out the next morning.

We broke their five—five black. They never tried it again. And we didn't just break their back in the warehouse; we was in contact with this guy in the packing room, and he started getting busy. Well, it happened so fast after that—they really realized the game was up. I put the NAACP's on their tail too, and they started a pressure campaign. In one year you wouldn't recognize the place.

The ILWU Oral History Project was launched by the union and the University of California in the 1980s, with funding by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and includes interviews with over 200 ILWU members. Danny Beagle, then-editor of The Dispatcher, and UC Professor David Wellman were the projects co-directors. Harvey Schwartz and Marcia Mehlau made significant contributions, including then-ILWU archivist Carol Cuenod and some outstanding students in the Labor Studies Program at San Francisco State University.
Brown traveled overseas to get international support for 1948 longshore strike.

Donald W. Brown was a mambassador of goodwill

By GENE BAILEY

COOS BAY, Ore.—Donald W. Brown, a longtime ILWU activist, died January 20 at age 84. He spent most of his life in southwestern Oregon, Coos Bay, North Bend, Reedsport-Gardiner areas, working as a Local 12 longshoreman.

After ITF, Brown finished high school in southwestern Oregon where he tried college for a couple of years but was unable to continue due to The Depression. He turned to professional baseball as an infielder before joining the ILWU.

Brown held numerous Local 12 offices needed for problems and organizing, and overseas dockworkers; some, through their unions, sent telegram to President Harry Truman, informing him that if ships in the port couldn’t be unloaded, thousands of meetings, hundreds of hours of discussion, returns, and scores of sessions with beligerent employers, Ole Fagerhaugh was a frequent and welcome visitor to International, always bringing a treat for the staff, a kind smile and a soft-spoken word.

International Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus Curt McClain remembered Fagerhaugh’s Special Qualities. He was a dedicated union man, and very sincere. He listened to what people had to say before making a decision. Consequently, he would ask the people if they had all the answers. He was an organizer’s organizer.

Fagerhaugh is survived by spouse Shizuko of San Francisco; son Paul of Minneapolis; and brother Torkel of Brainard, MN.

Walter Stack stood up to Red Scare

By BILL BAILEY

SAN FRANCISCO—A man more known for his social ideals and action in America’s trade union movement died a few days ago, Walter J. Stack.

I first met Walter in San Francisco during the 1936 West coast longshore strike. We both were members of the Marine Firemen’s Union. He was born in the Detroit area.

His family, fighting against severe poverty, were forced to have Walter and his brothers work in an orphanage home where life there was not an easy one.

At the age of 16, he broke out and headed for New York. Unable to find work, he did what many others hungry, unemployed young men did at that time; he jacked up his age, even using a few years, after which, he joined the army in order to eat.

A BETTER WAY

Big and muscular, he found his way to the New York waterfront, where he managed to get a job on a boarder merchant ship, which was to become his life ship. It was the many ports he visited throughout the world, viewing poverty and hardship at its core, that convinced Walter that a better social system worldwide had to be found to replace the existing capitalist system that offered nothing to the working man and woman but poverty, hardship and terrible conditions.

It was on a trip to Asia, where he came in contact with the Marxist ideology that the means and power were in the hands of the capitalist class and that this solution was the remedy that would be the ultimate cure in replacing the capitalist system.

As a member of the west coast Marine Firemen’s Union he would always be out in the front ranks championing workers’ rights. He was elected many times to serve as his union’s agent for the MFW.

WITCH HUNTS

When Senator Joe McCarthy came along Stack and many others in the Marine Firemen’s Union lost their union’s patronage because of their refusal to cooperate with McCarthy’s anti-progress witch hunts and inerrinate other trade unionists.

We all had to go out and continue to hustle our way up the docks for many years I lost contact with Walter. He got married, and had a lovely daughter who became a wonderful, talented artist.

Walter became a member of the Hod Carrier’s Union and was elected on numerous occasions to its district council. He took up jazzing and played even in that sport; he threw open doors of sports clubs to women who had been excluded before.

A few years ago, when a more progressive and liberal leadership reviewed the union’s history, he was awarded honorary membership in the Marine Firemen’s Union for his outstanding contribution to the cause of organized labor and his sacrifices as a result of the McCarthy witch hunt era, during which he lost his right to continue his occupation as an American woman and union official.

He leaves behind a brother Joe, a daughter Mary Stavus, and a strong trade union tradition that to achieve one’s rights, one must join hands with your fellow worker and fight to accomplish them. It was true in his youthfull days as it remains true today. “Workers of the world unite,” as Walter would tell us.

Bill Bailey is retired member of the ILWU, an honorary member of the MFW, the subject of a video documentaty and a book biography, and indisputably a legend in his own right.
Throughout the history of the United States, the civil rights movement has been closely linked with the trade union movement. Visionaries among both African American and white workers saw quickly that racial strife among the working class was just one more ploy by those who would conquer through division.

So, this country's history is rife with examples of how the industrial owners tried—often successfully—to use race (as well as religion and ethnicity) to keep their employees from uniting to get their fair share of the economic pie. For union organizers, especially in the South, this has meant that the men and women who were helping to win the benefits of union representation had to be educated as they were being organized. This has never been an easy job. In fact, throughout the "Depression Days," or, for that matter, not in the North even in this so-called post-industrial society.

Employers and their friends in government make it hard enough to organize. Add to that the fact that there are other problems and other barriers to unionizing workers and it becomes impossible to see how our nation can ever truly unite. Tough problems cited

Michael K. Honey, as assistant professor of labor and ethnic studies at the University of Washington, Tacoma, outlines these problems and other barriers to organizing workers in his paperback study of the southern industrial time.

"The book provides many lessons for uniting and for keeping workers together," he says. "The most significant is the one that teaches that workers must be free and stay united. If ever the progressive forces in this country needed the kind of unity shown in Honey's book, it is now.

New film on Mandela, ANC airs on Cinemax this month

This month the premium cable channel Cinemax will air "Countdown to Freedom: Days That Changed South Africa." Narrated by James Earl Jones, the documentary looks at significant events before and after the death of Nelson Mandela. The film provides a history of the African National Congress, the most significant political force in South Africa. It also includes interviews with former ANC leaders and other key figures in their fight for freedom.

NDCG gets ready for '95

OAKLAND, Ca.—The Northern California District Council kicked off the new year with a meeting at the Local 6 Hall in Oakland. President Emeritus LeRoy King swore in the newly-elected officers: President, Joe B. Jasen, Local 6; vice-president, Bill Watkins, Local 10; and secretary-treasurer, Ray Become, Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific.

Delegates elected Lawrence Thibeaux as legislative representative and Robert Watson as administrative representative. The following delegates will represent area labor councils: Alameda, Dave Johnson; San Francisco, LeRoy King and A. Dale Livingston; Contra Costa, Lawrence Thibeaux; and Santa Clara County, Don Brown. Rhina Battist LeRoy King and Don Watson are California Labor Federation delegates.

King will serve as the office of the mission. King turned over the reins to Jasen who said that "the NDCG has made a remarkable job of building the political arena than ever before.

Local 45, Stockton

Titleholders for 1995: President, Dan Dana, vice-president, John Dyer, and secretary-treasurer, Frank Le. The ILWU/IBU agreed to be responsible for ensuring a trained supply of labor.

Local 200, Unit 87, Wrangell

Titleholders: President, Allan Hayes; vice-president, Gene Finnemore; secretary-treasurer, Ron Schmitz. The ILWU/IBU agreement to be responsible for ensuring a trained supply of labor.

Local 200 Regional Director John Bukoskey, left, gives ILWU International President Brian McWilliams a gift from the Local 200 membership: a mounted, framed copy of the new immigration law the ILWU wrote and lobbied for to safeguard the jobs of American workers in the State of Alaska.

ILWU's "Alaska Exception" to immigration regs becomes law

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Department of Labor will publish a new law February 21 that—once and for all—codifies the "Alaska Exception" written by the ILWU to settle jurisdictional problems arising from existing U.S. immigration laws.

"It's great to see that, after more than two years of our legislative efforts are paying off," said ILWU International President Brian McWilliams. "This law will finally lay to rest many of the disputes we had in the State of Alaska over foreign seamen performing longshore work in U.S. waters."