SAN FRANCISCO—Many topics were discussed but one clearly dominated the December 7-8, 1995 International Executive Board meeting here at ILWU headquarters: the status of one California local’s per capita payments.

Per capita is that portion of a member’s monthly dues that is allocated for the International. The amount of per capita currently ranges from $5.30 to $9.90, depending on base wages. Except for the ILWU Canadian Area, ILWU Locals and IBU Regions forward the per capita to the International each month after collecting dues locally. Rules governing per capita are set by majority vote of rank-and-file elected delegates at the triennial ILWU International Convention and then incorporated into the ILWU Constitution (Article X, Per Capita and Assessments).

Since 1988, however, ILWU warehouse Local 26 (Los Angeles) has paid less per capita than required. Based on the Local’s claim of economic hardship, the Titled Officers and the Board afforded the Local a period of time to recoup rather than demand funds the Local didn’t have.

TIGHT ALL AROUND
But certain developments over the last few years necessitated reconsideration. Many locals, regions and the International, too, have increasingly felt the pinch of economic constraints; and while reserves in some treasuries declined, Local 26’s increased steadily. Further, ILWU Conventions have repeatedly had to grapple with the question of whether to seat Local 26 delegates, due to the Local’s failure or inability to be ‘in technical “good standing”’ by paying the same per capita required of others.

To ensure fairness and uniformity, the 1991-1994 Board voted to bring Local 26 into compliance with the per capita rules of the ILWU Constitution. But nothing changed. The new Titled Officers and Board sworn into office in August, 1994 also took action, culminating with a vote in April, 1995 that required Local 26 to (1) immediately start paying at the proper rate and (2) to pay at least a portion of back per capita owed (see The Dispatcher, April 13, 1995).

continued on page 3
Investment in organizing pays big dividends

During their December, 1995, meeting, the International Executive Board heard reports on a number of significant organizing efforts occurring since the Board last met in August.

**Pacific Northwest**
ILWU Titled Officers Joe Ibarra, Rich Austin, and Leonard Honshjo and Field Staff Casey Sharpe and Mike Diller all traveled to Seattle at the request of workplace Local 9 President Tom Hutter to participate in an organizing drive for the Port of Seattle employees. Other organizing leads are being pursued as well.

**Northern California**
International Key Abba Ramos continues to be actively involved with all ILWU divisions. The union is awaiting a final determination from the NLRB on challenged ballots at the Pacific Institute for Research and Education. The NLRB ruled against the ILWU at Port of Pacific Trucking, determining that the truckers were "independent contractors" and not entitled to Fair Labor Standards protections. Meanwhile, several other organizing efforts involving about 500 workers in all, are being carried on simultaneously, with help from organizer Mireya Cazares, who recently filed a recognition petition for scale workers at Yusen Terminal, Inc., Centennial Stevedoring Services and Stevedoring Services of America. Sign-ups are underway at other locations. Work at Selix Formalers at Port Hueneme just recently organized.

**Southern California**
ILWU locals have been ably assisted by Mike Diller, recruiting in a petition to represent 50 office clericals at Mitsu OSK Lines (America) for Local 63, Office Clerical Unit, and a drive to organize more vessel planners under Local 63. Marine Clerks. The election at Golden West Refinery in Santa Fe Springs is in the hands of the NLRB, which could order the employer to bargain with the ILWU if the case is not dropped. Also in Southern California, the ILWU International continues to participate in the LA MAP project, a unified effort by several unions to organize industries in the Southland.

**Responsibility, Accountability and Courage**

By BRIAN McWILLIAMS
ILWU International President

There's a lot of mythology that surrounds the ILWU. Despite our penchant for slogans and saints, it's always been a people's union: people who were tired of the principles we all say we support: people who take the reins of leadership in troubled times; people who took their leaders to task when those leaders failed them; just ordinary people who reached inside themselves to find extraordinary courage.

It's courage in the little things, too, that counts, like going to union meetings and speaking your mind, asking questions and making sure you get straight answers. And with the challenges the ILWU faces, we had better summon all the courage we can muster, because sometimes, somewhere we're bound to confront issues we'd rather not.

If and when things come to a head, it's usually at our international conventions. The ILWU next year is just a year and one-half away. Now is the time to start thinking about it, bearing in mind not just our rights under this splendid union of ours, but our individual abilities and collective responsibilities to it, along with a couple of elemental truths:

1.) You don't get something for nothing.
2.) In every action, there is an opposition and an equal reaction.

TOUGH CHOICES

All of this adds up to tough choices—and nobody knows that better than your Titled Officers here at the International. As the only officers elected by the entire rank-and-file of the ILWU, we constantly have to weigh the needs of the many against the needs of the few. That's our job, and we take it seriously, relying on the ILWU Constitution, our oath of office, Convention action, and standing policies and procedures to guide us.

Similarly, the members you elect to region by region serve on the ILWU International Executive Board (IEB) must also consider the "big picture" when acting on your behalf (and shall make all actions necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Constitution and the Convention decisions." (Article VI, Section 10, ILWU Constitution)

Ideally, then, when the IEB (comprised of Titled Officers and regional members) convenes in its official capacity, it is to act in the interests of the union as a whole, not its segregated parts. Practically, however, that's not always the case. It then becomes the responsibility of the ILWU rank-and-file—YOU—to make your representatives accountable.

In my four years as Titled Officer (first as International Vice President and now as President) it has come home to me personally with every one of us in a very personal sense.

When my administration was elected, all the Titled Officers came into knowing the monumental (albeit, unwieldy) task we had before us. We cut staff, eliminated some programs, as long as some locals were not paying the constitutionally-mandated rate ($5.50, $.05 per member per month, depending on the member's case, rather than hourly pay).

When I presented Convention delegates a totally unworkable budget containing pie-in-the-sky projections based on a generous bequests from the estates of ILWU members helped defray costs. And Local 142, Hawaii, and the Local 13 Allied Division in Wilmington paid their dues to the International, despite their own financial problems.

DOGGING BULLETS

We dodged the bullet in '95, but we're not going to be so lucky in '96. We'll run a deficit this year, and, at this rate, we will get to the 97 Convention in San Francisco with barely enough money to get to the '97 Convention with barely enough money to pay for it. The Big Question is: will the delegates do what it takes to keep this organization afloat?

If recent events are any indication, we could be headed for a repeat of 1994. Oh, we can cut this administration down to size, to fund these programs, as long as some locals were not paying their fair share. Per capita (the last time I checked) is not optional, nor is it merely a suggested guideline. It is a constitutional requirement intended to keep our union intact for the benefit of all members.

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Responsibility, Accountability and Courage
DUES & DOWNS...

During its two-day meeting, the IEB ruled on a complaint by the ILWU Local's union busting charge against the International. After the hearing was convened, the Board reversed itself, voting overwhelmingly to reverse its April decision to make Local 26 comply, thus nullifying the reason for the receivership hearing. Several hours of discussion consumed the Board before and after the 15-5 vote in favor of the motion. All four Titled Officers and Board members agreed that the discussion and the vote.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

On December 7, the Board, approved, by majority vote, procedures for the receivership hearing set for the next day. But on December 8, just before the Board was to hear the case, the IEB reversed itself, voting overwhelmingly to reverse its April decision to make Local 26 comply, thus nullifying the reason for the receivership hearing.

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Again, Local 26 did not comply, prompting the Titled Officers to resort to Article X, Section 3 of the Constitution. This provision allows the International President to appoint, subject to Board approval, a "receiver" to handle a local’s finances in order to return that local to good standing. The Board’s responsibilities include conducting a hearing to determine if receivership is warranted.

POLITICAL ACTION

M-Williams also hailed a major victory for the ILWU in its ongoing battle with the U.S. Department of State over its interpretation of immigration laws, specifically those dealing with longshore "reciprocity." Because of intense ILWU political action, the Board reversed itself, voting overwhelmingly to reverse its April decision to make Local 26 comply, thus nullifying the reason for the receivership hearing.

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An IEB Reverses Decision on Local’s Dues Debt

continued from page one

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Ronald S. E. Ryan, second term, has returned to the ILWU's bargaining table following the completion of his term as a member of the International Arbitration Board. Ryan, who has been involved in numerous arbitrations, was appointed to the board by the ILWU's Executive Council in 1993.

In other news, the ILWU's Political Action Committee has endorsed the reelection of State Senator John Ensign, Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate. The committee cited Ensign's strong record of supporting labor issues and his commitment to promoting economic development in Nevada.

The ILWU has also announced its support for the passage of legislation to increase the minimum wage. The union's political arm has endorsed a bill that would raise the minimum wage to $15 per hour by 2025.

Furthermore, the ILWU has endorsed the re-election of Governor Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, for a second term. The union praised Sisolak's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and his commitment to supporting workers' rights.

The ILWU's Political Action Committee has also endorsed several local candidates, including City Council member Amanda Platte, who is running for the District 7 seat.

The ILWU has been active in the Nevada political scene, with the union's political arm actively involved in numerous campaigns, including the recent re-election of Senator Steve Sisolak.

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A few critical words are in order on the state of our union this front, that is, the Pacific Coast ports and in all work categories: longshoremen, clerks, and walking bosses. The way the locals are heading, and their application of the coast contracts, is moving more in the direction of building and maintaining a "job trust" instead of acting like a labor union with built-in trade union principles.

The word "trust" usually describes an employer organization. It is a term applied to banks, corporations, cartels and monopolies. It means an organizing controlled and operated for profit.

**BASIC PRINCIPLES**

Our union was organized and built around the basic principles of protecting and advancing the interests of workers as a whole, starting of course with the interests of workers who were and are members of the union. And I know I am still elected and scabs removed and get a joint long-term agreement, we never would have won our clear to all workers that we had our union had not originally made it around the basic principles and gains are being forgotten about.

**FACING THE FACTS**

In our own interest, this fact must be faced. Thousands of workers, especially Negro workers, would be glad of the chance to go to work on the waterfront under our contracts, even if it means working only two or three days a week as B men. Yet the union strength is being used to limit the number being added. Controlling registration is one thing. A "job trust" is something else again.

If I am on the beam on this point, then, unless such policies are changed, the end of our union at least in terms of being a union standing for solid trade union principles is in sight. It doesn't take union men or union leaders to manage a job trust; politicians, hoodlums and labor bosses can do a better job than the type of union men and union leaders we say we are.

Another trade union truth: Our union's contracts, our pension, welfare, and mechanism agreements rank with the best in the country. They are better than most by a long shot; yet they are as good, if the chips get down, as the strength, unity and understanding of the union which stands behind them. The union guarantees them, not a contract.

Weakening the union, forgetting the working-class principles of the union, weakens that guarantee. Such weakening will lead to disaster. The "job trusts" or "monopolies" will swallow or eliminate the very people who hope to become rich, powerful or union piecemeal through such methods.

**ADJUSTING IT UP**

What does all this add up to? We are one union in the country which has a chance to put hundreds of workers to work. Thousands of workers who want jobs are available as possible by using union strength and our agreements to do so.

Our union should fight to bring in as many new men as are necessary, and, to this extent at least, pay off some of the debt we owe to workers generally throughout the whole country. The rank and file must realize that there are millions of unemployed in the country.

our waterfront unions organized. I for one am sure hoping we never forget what our union should be, must be. It can't ever be allowed to become a "job trust." If it does, plenty of people who think they have made it are in for a rude awakening, waiting for the levings of the "trust" and taking its orders without any back talk.

**Cruisin' to the Coast**

Delegations from overseas unions are a common sight at International Headquarters, where information on work trends and expressions of solidarity are freely exchanged. Here ILWU officials meet with trade unionists from Ukraine (top right), Korea (bottom right and Japan (below left). Familiar ILWU faces are Coast Beneficiary Specialist Jon Santana, Coast Committee Member Glen Ramskey, International Vice President Dick Austin, Research Director Russ Bergmann, Coast Committee Member Doug Olson, International President Bill McWilliams, and Local 12 members Doug Getchell and Larry Hansen.
THE MESSAGE GOING OUT TO SEAFARERS AROUND THE WORLD

"Cargo handling is our work"

ITF News

"Dock work for dock workers" is the cry now being heard in ports the world over, as dock workers engage in a struggle to maintain not only their jobs but their work as cargo handlers.

But workers find themselves increasingly threatened by the consequences of privatization, deregulation and even the threat of jobs to nonunion labor.

A further threat is the use of seafarers for the unloading of ships once they arrive at a port.

As a result, the ITF and its affiliated unions have set in action a campaign in which seafarers are asked to come to the aid of dock workers by refusing to handle cargo when called upon to do so.

TRADITIONAL WORK

"The ITF, its affiliated seafarers' and dockers' unions agree that cargo handling and work traditionally or historically done by dock workers should remain dock workers' work," writes ITF Dockers' Section Secretary Kees Marges, in a newsletter entitled "Important message to seafarers."

Marges further explains that the dangers involved in seafarers taking over dockers' work are manifold, for not only do dockers lose their jobs, but seafarers are made to do work for which they are neither paid, nor trained. This practice threatens the safety of a vessel as the risk is that cargo is not properly secured by trained professionals.

A first step was taken in support of dock workers on this issue in 1994 when a "cargo handling clause" was added to all ITF-approved agreements covering seafarers on flag of convenience vessels. This clause aims at keeping seafarers from performing tasks traditionally carried out by dock workers, except when sanctioned by an ITF-affiliated dockers' union, when seafarers willingly agree to perform such work, and are duly compensated for it.

EAST MEETS NORTHWEST

Russian dockers travel to Tacoma

By DAVE HERMANSEN

TACOMA—A delegation of Russian longshoremen, "dockers," recently traveled from the Port of Vladivostok on the far east coast of Russia to the Pacific Northwest to observe ILWU longshore operations, visit with our members and their families, do a little shopping, and more. Prime on their agenda, however, was to determine if their union could have some sort of affiliation with the ILWU.

The members of the delegation were chosen by their union peers on the basis of who contributed the most to their union: Vladimir Reksha, Union President, Port of Vostochy; foremen Ivan Tomilin and Viktor Bucryanov; union: Vladimir Reksha, Union President, Port of Vostochy; foremen Ivan Tomilin and Viktor Bucryanov; dockers Alexander Stepanchenko, Victor Borisov, Oleg Rasatkin, Grigory Gudok, and Andrey Abrudensky; dockers Alexander Stepanchenko, Victor Borisov, Oleg Rasatkin, Grigory Gudok, and Andrey Abrudensky; and their families.

They talked about their standard of living compared to ours. They were amazed at the conditions we enjoy. After visiting several longshoremen's homes, they declined further invitations, saying that their hearts hurt too much from what they had seen already.

THE RUSSIAN FRONT

They talked about the need for greater unity on Russia's east coast docks. Each dock has its own contract and pay scale. The dockers work for just one stevedore company, and cannot go to work for another very easily. The hiring "shape-up" system is prevalent. (On the plus side, when asked if American sailors are allowed to unload American ships in their ports, the answer was a resounding "NO.")

And, finally, they talked about the possibility of affiliation. Meeting with ILWU International Rep Dick Wise, Local 23 IA Tony DePaul and Seattle LRC member Dave Vigil, the dockers said they needed our help to get all their docks under one contract—a task our forefathers accomplished over 60 years ago, through their blood, sweat and tears.

The question of a formal affiliation is a complicated one, given differences in international laws, geographical distance, ability to serve, requirements under the various union constitutions and other compelling considerations. But, as the ILWU officials and members alike assured, our mission of international solidarity, outreach and support for our Russian brothers and sisters remains.

The International and its legal counsel are exploring possibilities. Local 19 President Bob Lindsey said he would bring up the dockers' request for an exchange program with his local, and would also see if he could get them a fax machine. Local 23 will send a delegation to Tacoma's "sister port" of Vladivostok in August (check with the Local for particulars). And we can thank Jon Engles of Local 58 who helped with the interpretation that allowed us to convey all this.

Our Russian brothers and sisters are not from the "Evil Empire" that our politicians tried to brainwash us into believing; nor are we the "Imperialists" they were painted by their political leaders. They came here to ask for a little help and guidance on how to mold their unions' future. We welcome—and are honored by—the opportunity to help them in any way we can.

Dave Hermansen is a Local 23 member and activist.

ILWU protests nonunion coal loading at Port of Los Angeles

ILWU Longshore Division locals raised hell and union consciousness January 10-11 as an estimated 2,000 union members joined a massive informational picket line to protest a nonunion coal loading operation at the Port of Los Angeles.

The nonunion work was subcontracted by Los Angeles Export Terminal, which is 49% owned by a Japanese business consortium, including several shipping lines that rely on ILWU labor. They know how it works—and doesn't!!

Seafarers' unions covering seafarers on national-flag ships are also working on establishing the no-cargo-handling clause in their national agreements.

BLOW THE WHISTLE

The ITF is calling on rank and file members of all affiliated unions to call attention to violations of these agreements so that steps can be taken to defend dockers' work, as well as the safety and status of seafarers.

Commenting on the campaign, Kees Marges said, 'Dock workers as a group have generally held a strong, collectively organized position in the world of transport, and the nature of their work has in addition given them strategic importance in global transport industries."

'For this reason, they, perhaps more than any other group of transport workers, are called upon to perform acts of solidarity, not only for trade union rights, but also for environmental and political causes. It is well known that dock workers have never been slow in lending support. A case in point being the great successes of the ITF flag of convenience campaign, where solidarity actions taken by dockers through the world have secured basic jobs and basic rights for seafarers on runaway ships."

'Now is the time for seafarers to show solidarity with the dockers.'
Edited by HARVEY SCHWARTZ

This month we trace the roots of what in the 1950s became the ILWU’s cotton compress jurisdiction in California’s interior. In the wake of the 34 strike, an ILA cotton compress local was set up at San Pedro in 1936. During 1937-1938, to protect that local, which was now part of the ILWU, the CIO organized the compresses in the Fresno and Bakersfield area.

Cotton compressing—reducing the size of 500 pound cotton bales for shipment and storage—was brutal work in the whole southern thing with them. Many of the workers had worked in the compresses in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. When they followed the industry out here in the 1920s and 1930s, they brought that whole southern thing with them.

You would walk through a plant and see a foreman just standing right over him, saying do it, do it, do it, do it! If he didn’t like a guy he’d lay him off. He and I could never get along. If he said, ‘Don’t come back tomorrow. I got a man to take your place,’ only after we got the union, we got to the place where we had some seniority.

I had a block foreman out one year, name of Rip something-or-other. This Rip was a driver, he was a hard man. He wanted everyone to run with him hard trucks. He had this record player by the press, and he would put this whole stack of records on it, mostly what we called colored records, jazz. He would have us runnin’ ourselves to death, tripping all over one another to get back to that music. Until they caught up, which was pretty soon, and they made away with that music. That was around the time the union came in.

Lewis of CIO and other guys like that, and they were trying to school us about the power that labor had. They were mostly drumlin’ us to be good labor people. And, of course, Huisel told us how they was payin’ more in other places.

We voted in the union, struck for three days, and won a contract with better wages, overtime, holiday pay, seniority and a grievance system. After that we began to get very particular about the time to stop pressing time and a half and so on.

And one hundred bales an hour became the production standard—the boss might get 100 or 105, but he wouldn’t be gettin’ 125 bales like he used to. He would get a fair day’s work, that’s all.

January 17, 1996

Union council meetings in the 1940s were held to coordinate organizing in California’s central valley.

A union contract made the difference between hard work and back-breaking work at the cotton compress.

TOMMY BURSE

"We want a nickel more"

The walkout was at a time of year when they had a lot of work, and for us to ask for the same thing they had over the line. So when the superintendent, Carl West, found out that we had quit, he came down out of his office. He cursed at us. He swore all the time. "Goldman," he said, "what you want?" Somebody called out, "Mr. West, we want a nickel more an hour." Goldman, he says, "you don’t want nothing. I thought you was striking for something. Yall get back to work."

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We didn’t have no union yet, so Walter Foster called a guy who worked at the Laborers’ Union. They sent an old black guy out of the Waiters Union up from Los Angeles to talk to us. He came up two or three times to tell us to organize and about the advantages we’d get. I heard afterwards that the longshoremen were helping him. Pretty soon after that, Hursel Alexander, a black CIO organizer from Los Angeles, came up to organize us into Local 272 of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPA).

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OLLIE LEWIS

"We voted in the union"
Revels Cayton, Sr., leaves a long and proud legacy of union and civic activism

By JIM SAN JUO

SAN FRANCISCO—Revels Cayton, Sr., former San Francisco Deputy Mayor and a well-known trade union leader, and longtime friend of the ILWU died November 4 at his San Francisco home at age 88. Born in Seattle, Washington, he was the son of Horace B. Cayton, a Mississippi plantation slave freed in 1864 by the Emancipation Proclamation who went on to become the publisher and editor of the Seattle Republican, a weekly newspaper.

Revel Cayton’s mother was Susie Summer Revels, the daughter of Hiram R. Revels, who succeeded Jefferson Davis as the first black labor delegate to the U.S. Senate in 1870. Revels’ education included studies in Reconstruction days after the Civil War.

LABOR AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Raised and educated in Seattle, Revels Cayton’s first year at the University of Washington was disrupted by the Depression. To earn a living, he went to sea in the merchant marine. His activities later focused on the needs of working people, and he eventually became the head of the advancement of the African-American community. His natural gifts as an organizer combined with his quick wit and a powerful personality of great warmth, catapulted him into early trade union leadership.

After participating in the 1934 West Coast Maritime Strike, Cayton was elected a business agent of the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union. Later union posts would include Secretary-Treasurer of the San Francisco District Council of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific Northwest, ILWU Legal Counsel, ILWU’s bargaining agenda at a longshore caucus. Our top officials and the Coast Committee can’t understand that I am called out of the hall on a two-hour job when we have an eight-hour guarantee. Where has good common sense gone? I must make 15 hours like all longshoremen.

The AFL-CIO and the Million Man March haven’t helped me with this. I have been fighting it for seven years. I want to see if democracy works on this opinion of mine and you print this.

Robert Miles

Local 13, retired
San Pedro, CA

History lessons

I enjoyed reading Brother Hackett’s memories of the struggles of the Warehouse Union History and Labor, the November, 1995, issue of The Dispatcher (ILWU Oral Histories, Part XII).

Brother Hackett was a singular man. I met him a few years ago while researching a story. He enthusiastically responded to my questions and seemed delighted in sharing the history of Local 6. In fact, he was passionate about his union. I was surprised to learn he never ran for office. Apparently, he preferred to work behind the scenes. Unassumingly and quietly generous, he never wanted credit for his research. He never told me his given name. Just call me Brother Hackett.

He might have been a great teacher had life tossed him a different deck. Instead, he imparted through his own life, a model of a proud and dedicated union man.

Maria Brooks

Video Producer
Oakland, CA

Bum rap

I disagree with Gene Vrana’s review of The Longshore Union History. When You’re Tired (What They’re Saying), November 20, 1995) and hope nobody in the ILWU lets it prevent you from reading this excellent book. I’ve already bought four copies for friends. Read the book for yourself and you’ll see how wrong the review really is.

Robert Miles

Local 13, retired
San Pedro, CA

Form & substance

I’ve been a member of this union since 1959, and I’ve seen it grow, so it seems to me that we should update The Dispatcher. It’s still one of the best ways to reach the masses.

Suggestion: How about the size of The Dispatcher? I’d like to save them for my children, etc.

Jeff A. Pettu

Local 63
Huntington Beach, CA

Democracy in action

I am a 37-year member of ILWU longshore Local 10. I am very unhappy about the nonunion things that go on in the ILWU. The “injury to one is an injury to all” no longer applies.

Our top officials and the Coast Committee can’t understand that I am called out of the hall on a two-hour job when we have an eight-hour guarantee. Where has good common sense gone? I must make 15 hours like all longshoremen. Where has good common sense gone? I must make 15 hours like all longshoremen.

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Oswald H. Wills

Local 10
Oakland, CA

Ed note: Coast longshore negotiations included a rank-and-file-elected delegates will set the ILWU’s bargaining agenda at a longshore caucus. Although agreements vary (locals are autonomous under the ILWU Constitution), members usually attend meetings to ratify agreements to determine what they want and to debate the matters presented to the delegates who represent them to the ILWU. Longshore division members and retirees may observe caucus proceedings.

San Pedro, CA
IBU to the rescue!

BY JESSICA CHRISTENSEN

If you’ve ever been on a ferry boat, you’re likely noticed that loading this huge vessel works by cars, guiding it in and out of what seem like very small docks, and navigating the boat across sometimes disagreeable waters is no easy task.

But it’s easy to forget all this as you sit on the car deck, taking in the breeze off the water. On July 12, 1995, however, a reminder of just how highly trained and formidable ferry crew members are.

A small open boat capsized near the ferry State Ferry Cathlamet got a dramatic reminder of how quickly the ferry crew can gather and mobilize a rescue effort. Ordinary workers in the private sector cannot be expected to respond when a small open boat capsized near the ferry.
The crew’s teamwork, quick thinking, and expertise were no surprise to me. I’ve known the ferry crew for a couple of years now, and I’ve always been impressed with their professionalism and willingness to do whatever is necessary to get the job done.

The ferry crew is a model of cooperation and efficiency. The crew members work together seamlessly, everyone doing their part to ensure the safety of the passengers and crew. They are trained to handle a wide range of situations, from simple assistance to life-threatening emergencies.

Working towards a more balanced budget is a worthy goal. Presumably, reducing interest on the national debt would free up needed funds for infrastructure spending, job training and education, and programs to improve the quality of life for the American people.

This, however, is not the real goal of theprivileged few and their allies. Their real goal is to substantially decrease the federal role in the welfare of its people. That’s exactly the reason why a huge tax cut for wealthy people is a “welfare at the top” of the Republican balanced budget plan. The goal is to take as much money out of the budget as possible and spend popular federal programs to death.

The Republicans are carrying their economic program with an agenda to maximize profits. The Republicans are determined to destroy what remains of the Democratic health care program and accept a lump-sum payment that could be used for medical expenses, but more than likely would be used for vacation homes in Florida. Taking the wealthy and healthy out of Medicare would certainly destroy the safety net for poor and middle class seniors.

The prospect of raising even more taxes on working people to pay for the added cost of Medicare for those left in the program would seal its fate in the long term.

The so-called “block grants” for Medi-Cal are a serious threat. Federal grants account program which would allow healthy seniors to opt-out of the program and accept a lump-sum payment that could be used for medical expenses, but more than likely would be used for vacation homes in Florida. Taking the wealthy and healthy out of Medicare would certainly destroy the safety net for poor and middle class seniors.

The prospect of raising even more taxes on working people to pay for the added cost of Medicare for those left in the program would seal its fate in the long term.

Neither the President, nor the Republican Congress have substantively reformed corporate welfare programs that suck money out of the budget, and have adverse affects on workers. For example, tax breaks for multinational corporations who manufacture overseas are supported by the GOP, and the President and Demo- crats are not committed to real reform which would reign in these multinational corporations.

BETTER NONE AT ALL

In the upcoming weeks, the Gingrich Republicans will attempt to bring the country to its knees in order to pass the agenda of the privileged few. We are, unfortunately, in the position of pressuring the President and Congressional Democrats to minimize the damage. Look for the Republicans in the next couple of weeks to refuse to fund occupational safety and health and other important programs for working people.

No budget deal is better than what’s on the table for the privileged few and their allies.

By LINDSAY McLAUGHLIN

GOP tries to pull a fast one in so-called Balanced Budget Act

For months we have been witnessing a national spectacle over a so-called seven-year Balanced Budget Act. The GOP has successfully forced the Presi- dent to present a budget which balances in the year 2002 using Congressional numbers.

In the interim, federal employees, federal contract workers, and America’s demands of government have held hostage in the name of projected budget numbers seven years from now. Innocent working people in the private sector suffered along with federal workers. Over 1,000 work place safety complaints went unanswered, complaints of minimum wage and overtime violations were unresolved by the Labor Department. The looking of workers’ pension funds were not investigated by the Government.

MEDI-SCAM

For example, the GOP Medicare program includes a so-called “uniform budgeting account program which would allow healthy seniors to opt-out of the program and accept a lump-sum payment that could be used for medical expenses, but more than likely would be used for vacation homes in Florida. Taking the wealthy and healthy out of Medicare would certainly destroy the safety net for poor and middle class seniors. The prospect of raising even more taxes on working people to pay for the added cost of Medicare for those left in the program would seal its fate in the long term.

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Neither the President, nor the Republican Congress have substantively reformed corporate welfare programs that suck money out of the budget, and have adverse affects on workers. For example, tax breaks for multinational corporations who manufacture overseas are supported by the GOP, and the President and Demo- crats are not committed to real reform which would reign in these multinational corporations.

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No budget deal is better than what’s on the table for the privileged few and their allies. Their real goal is to substantially decrease the federal role in the welfare of its people. That’s exactly the reason why a huge tax cut for wealthy people is a “welfare at the top” of the Republican balanced budget plan. The goal is to take as much money out of the budget as possible and spend popular federal programs to death. At the same time, major policy changes, as a central part of this Republican budget plan, amounted to undermine the very federal pro- grams that assist the majority of working Americans.

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