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Detroit march changed to June 20-22

Surprising Detroit newspaper unions made their unconditional re-turn-to-work offer two months ago, the Detroit News and Free Press have called back fewer than 100 of the 2,000 striking workers. The workers call this a lockout, and are amping up their strategic campaign.

Action! Motown '97, the national march on Detroit, will be held June 20-22, a week later than originally scheduled. Early plans for the weekend call for a teach-in Friday night, direct actions Saturday night and interfaith service Sunday morning. Organizers are billing the weekend as "a time to meet other workers and our families and stand up for your union and your family's future."

Strikers and supporters are also keeping the heat on the corporate boards of Gannett and Knight-Rid-der, which own the News and Free Press. More than 500 people rallied outside the Knight-Ridder shareholder's meeting in Philadelphia April 15 in a demonstration organized by the Philadelphia Council of Newspaper Unions.

Around 40 locked-out workers went inside as shareholders or proxy-hold-ers. The Detroit situation dominated a very emotional question-and-answer session, according to Shawn Ellis, a spokesperson for Detroit's Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions.

"CEO P. Anthony Ridder was not rattled by the fact that Knight-Ridder has lost $150 million in Detroit, but the board members were a bit more doubtful," said Ellis.

"Clearly the board could speak up and get this thing settled," Ellis added. "It is an emergency in silence cannot be tolerated."

For more info on Action! Motown '97, call 1-888-97-MOTOWN (toll-free) or 313-896-2600, or visit the Action! Motown web site: http://www.action97.org.

Local 142 to host AFL-CIO "Working Women" tour

What do working women want to know—and to find out, it has launched the first national "Working Woman" survey and tour. "Only by having the true picture of women's work experiences can the survey produce a response to help them in their strug-gles," said Gloriza Johnson, head of the AFL-CIO Executive Council's Working Women Committee.

More women are working than ever before, and more belong to unions. Today 39 percent of all union mem-bers are women, compared to 18 per-cent in 1960, and women make up close to half the workforce. Yet ine-quality persists. Women earn 75 cents to every dollar men make. Two out of three temporary workers are women, as are six out of 10 who make less than $5.25 per hour.

The "Ask a Working Woman" sur-vey is designed to build on this basic information. It queries women about the kind of work they do, how they change, benefits and working conditions, what has changed for them over the last five years, and what workplace issues are most important to them.

The AFL-CIO Working Women's Department wants to hear from both union and non-union women. It's cir-culating a survey through union lo-cals and central labor councils, women's, civil rights and religious groups, and making the questionnaire available on the World Wide Web.

Along with the survey, women AFL-CIO leaders plan to visit 20 cities to meet with working women and dis-cuss their concerns. ILWU Local 142 will host an event with Working Women's Dept. head Karen Nuss-baum when she visits Honolulu May 5. Other West Coast tour stops in-clude Seattle (May 22), San Francisco (May 30), and San Jose and San Diego on dates to be announced.

And finally, the AFL-CIO plans to bring its "Working Women's Day" to Washington, D.C. September 6-7 to discuss the results of the survey and tour.

If you can help circulate the survey in your local or other groups, you can call (toll-free) 1-800-971-9797 for copies. Deadline for returning the surveys is July 5. You can find the survey on-line at http://www.afl-ci-o.org/womn/. For West Coast tour info, call Cue Vu at 202-637-5087.

Kaiser walkout a striking success

Northern California Kaiser hospitals and clinics stood nearly idle April 16 when approximately 25,000 workers stayed off the job in a strike called by the California Nurses Association. The 7,500 nurses represented by CNA have been working without a contract since January 30. Negotiations remain stalled, with the giant HMO stick-ing to its call for major concessions, including a two-tier pay scale and policy changes which would rob RNs of control over staffing lev-els.

Members of five other unions joined the nurses on the picket line: SEIU Locals 250 and 535, Engineers and Scientists of California, OPEIU Local 29, and ILWU Warehouse Local 6, which represents X-ray technologists. All shared CNA's overriding concern that Kaiser's practices endanger patients' health. "I've been a Kaiser LVN for 25 years, and I've seen the good, the bad and now we're looking at the ugly," said Local 250 Executive Vice President Carolyn Perkins.

"This is not a money issue: it's about patient care," she said. with GE for the United Electrical Workers (UE). Among the other unions with members at GE are the Electrical Workers of ILWU, IAM, Teamsters and Communica-tions Workers (CWA/NABET at NBC, which merged with AFL-CIO).

Contracts for all the GE workers expire June 29. As in most manufac-turing talks, outsourcing will be a major job security issue, Tormey said. Additional paid time off is also long overdue.

Welch may be counting on GE's far-flung international operations to minimize the impact of any job ac-tions. But, according to Tormey, with AFL-CIO help, the U.S. unions are al-ready talking to unions that repre-sent GE workers in countries from Brazil to Malaysia. On the home front, the unions are planning both to mobilize members for rallies at GE plants and seek public support for workers' demands in communities where GE has an office or plant.

Low wage workers unionize in Canada

VANCouver, BC—Starbucks Corp. and the Canadian Auto Workers Local 3000 negotiators were making progress toward a first contract when management pulled a fast one—clos-ing down their own distribution cen-ter, which provides the baked goods to all outlets in British Columbia. The closure would be key to shutting down the whole operation, and the company's gambit will enable it to find other distribution methods be-fore a strike could begin.

The union has challenged the as-sertion that the factory's closure is for "business reasons," as claimed by Laurie Skinner, operations manager for Western Canada. Provincial labor law states that no changes in terms of employment can be made during the first four months of negotiations, which began February 11. John Bow-man, the CWA national representa-tive in Vancouver, said the union will file a complaint with the B.C. Labour Relations Board. Management "seems to be forcing some kind of con-frontation," he said.

The union signed up 110 people in the Vancouver area and a strike vote should be taken, he said. A strike should one be necessary. Workers in the province enjoy an automatic certifi-cation process, which means that when a majority of workers sign up.

Workers are asking for a raise to $7.20 (U.S.) and negotiations over sick leave, scheduling issues, job pro-tection and anti-harassment policies in the 94 Starbucks outlets in B.C.

CWA Local 3000 has concentrated on the low-wage service sector, with 3,600 workers and 54 bargaining units. "We're still organizing all the time. There's never a week that goes by without an application for certifi-cation," said Bowman, according to local president Denise Hellish, quoted in Our Times magazine.

—The Globe and Mail, and The Data Center
Did the INS aid Mediacopy's anti-union campaign?

By DAVID BACON

SAN LEANDRO, CA—Organizers for ILWU Local 6, and union supporters are accusing the Immigration and Naturalization Service of using enforcement tactics which denied workers rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

"The INS is being used as an active cooperation between the company and the INS in campaigning against the union," said Local 6 organizer Alfredo Flote. "But with or without conscious cooperation, INS actions aimed the company to win an anti-union election and violated the INS own policies."

Workers trying to join Local 6 lost an NLRA election at Mediacopy March 24 by a vote of 306 to 197. Another 130 voters were challenged, almost all by the company. Local 6 has filed legal motions to overturn the election, as well as unfair labor practice charges documenting widespread violations of workers' rights.

Mediacopy workers began discussing the idea of joining a union last fall. In December, agents of the INS served Mediacopy a personnel records, and called the letter "routine."

The letter was sent in apparent violation of INS policy against interfering in labor disputes. Revised Operations Instruction 287.3a, notes that "there is no prohibition against the government enforcing the Immigration and Nationality Act, even when there may be a labor dispute in progress." But the policy also lays down a series of precautions against relying on information "provided to the Service to retaliate against employees for exercising their right to join a union.

The instruction is intended to avoid situations in which employers use immigration raids and other enforcement actions to break up a union effort by deporting and threatening its new members. The INS letter apparently violated the intent of its own policy.

During the period following the immigration raid, the company launched a well-funded anti-union campaign. Mediacopy hired a union-busting consultant, Strategic Human Relations Service, and a public relations consultant, Bill Burns, who fored reporters stage-managed tours of the factory. Workers were forced to attend captive audience meetings in the plant during work hours. They were told the company would never sign a contract, shown videos of violent strikes, and warned they would be replaced if there were a strike. Conservationists say the company had workers one-on-one. According to Flote, some workers received paychecks noting that their company owns a plant where wages hover between $5 and $6 per hour. Mediacopy told them in February to come to work over the two years at the plant, that they had supplied for their own jobs with a local temporary agency, United Core Staff. The company left them their names off the list of employees eligible to vote in the election, and when they came to the polls anyway, challenged being their vote.

In the middle of this campaign, Mediacopy fired a leaflet February 24 but suddenly announcing that the INS was demanding the revetification of documents of 140 people. Then the company hired an immigration lawyer, Francisco Mejia, who went up to the plant to meet the workers. The workers were right to vote under U.S. labor law. "What happened here betrayed the rights of Mediacopy workers, but it's also a grim warning," noted Local 6 business agent Roberto Fleti. "Immigrant workers should not have to face an unfair alliance of anti-union unions, capitalists and the INS to get a job."

The march was as big as the organizers dreamed—maybe bigger. Close to 30,000 people massed in Watsonville, California April 13 to launch the strongest workers' organizing drive ever presented—longshore and warehouse workers of course, Local 6 and Local 17 banners held high—and thousands of bus drivers, truck drivers, flight attendants, ironworkers, homecare workers, clerical and electrical workers and row after row of farmworkers, on and on for miles of workers, nurses, janitors, teachers, nurses, janitors, teachers, bus drivers, truck drivers, flight attendants, ironworkers, homecare workers, clerical and electrical workers and row after row of farmworkers, on and on for miles. A billboard-size UPF eagle banner hung off the roof of a downtown department store and red-and-black UFW signs sprouted on tiny front lawns. "Con union se vive en la periferia," they read, "together for a better life."

And for a few hours you could almost touch that spirit. The labor movement was you and the person next to you and everyone who came on this sunny day because it was important to be there. After the marchers took the struggle home, more than 100 rank-and-file members and organizers from several unions stayed for a two-week organizing blitz to kick-start the drive in the fields. —MER

TASA workers zoom through union drive

By MARCY REIN

If ever a shop needed a union, TASA is it.

The Transamerican Steamship Agency works for TMM, Transports Comercio Maritimo, handling all the paperwork involved in getting cargo from port A to point B. It's high-pressure detail work, and there is always more of it than the staff can handle.

TASA employees routinely worked two, three, four hours of overtime without putting it on their cards.

"If you didn't get your work done, you looked bad, but the overtime wouldn't show up on your time card," said Cindi Williams. "You didn't clock it," said Cindi Williams, a tariff publisher.

For all their trouble the TASA workers, almost all women, a majority Latinas, had no union. In 1989 they organized and diag- nizing $7 per hour below industry stan- dards. Some made half what they'd earned. The NLRB said a three-day work week would look bad so you wouldn't have to manage an important, and I felt the union people was more of it than the staff can handle. Some of the union organizers, Paula Tillet, the friend gave her number to another. "Till we got together fin the drive on, we never knew everyone was going through the same things," said one soon. "We don't believe they're going to replace us," said ILWU organizer Mike Diller, who, along with Local 63 OCU Secretary-Treasurer Manny Garcia, stayed in constant contact with the TASA workers during the drive.

Management also threatened to move if the ILWU won claiming the company couldn't afford union wages.

In reality, TMM exploded after ILWU organizer Mike Diller, who, along with Local 6 OCU Secretary-Treasurer Manny Garcia, stayed in constant contact with the TASA workers during the drive.

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Labour Code legislation in Canada

By TOM PRICE

Canadian Area workers anxiously await the fate of Bill C-66, an act to amend Part III of the Canada Labour Code, as it makes its way through the Senate of the Canadian Parliament. The legislation has already passed some of the odious anti-labor recommendations of the West Coast Industrial Inquiry Commission.

Employer and agri-business groups originally pressured the Ministry of Labour to appoint the commission, saying a labor "crisis situation" existed on the docks. This came as quite a surprise to the longshore workers, who had only six work stoppages in the last 25 years. Canadian law makes the actual cut of striking very difficult, with a series of federally ap- pointed conciliation officers, lengthy notice requirements and constant monitoring by the ministry.

"The ILWU has never struck the grain," said Canadian Area Vice President Mike Rondpre, "but the employ- er has always seen fit to lock us out and wait for the government to legislate the dock work, which generally happens in short order."

The commission showed anti-labor bias in their hearings by striking their own job posters. According to their hearings, Canadian ILWU officials were not allowed to challenge union service, which is a fundamental right to the ILWU. It recommended that manage- ment force workers to carry loaded crews to unload any ship and that all shipping be declared an "essential service," meaning the government could intervene and force strikers back to work. This represented an all-out attack on the ILWU's jurisdiction.

"When the government intervenes in collective bargaining, it inserts it- self into the process as if it were an employer, an employer with unlimited power-power not contemplated as part of the balancing act outlined in the Canada Labour Code," president of the B.C. Federation of Labour Kenneth Georgetti stated in a brief to the Commission.

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The ILWU gathered for its 30th Convention facing some of the gravest challenges in decades. The push for privatization is accelerating around the globe. NAFTA is exerting downward pressure on wages and working conditions, and corporate accountability is shrinking while inequality is growing.

But the Convention itself showed how these challenges will be met: with the labor movement’s renewed commitment to organizing, and stronger ties among workers around the world.

Delegates left the Convention vowing to change the union into a dynamic organizing force. From International President Brian McWilliams’ opening speech, to the resolutions passed, to the union’s budget for the next three years, organizing was the constant refrain.

Continued on Page C4
Today's membership must decide whether we grow and fight or decline and wither away.

**ORGANIZING IS OUR LIFEBLOOD**

And just as individuals belong to the ILWU, so do the local unions and the regions of the IUB. Each local has to come terms with the same issues as do individual members: do issues about support for the common good, about unity about organizing, about making that commitment of time and resources to build and protect the ILWU? Without that unity and respect among the locals, among the regions, there is no ILWU.

Unorganized and organized workers alike can see how ILWU union contracts provide workers with dignity and a meaningful voice in their workplace and community—and they can see the connection between those contracts, contracts with decent conditions and benefits, and membership in the democratic, militant and progressive ILWU. That’s a combination that’s hard to beat.

Because of the sacrifices and dedication of the men and women who built and defended this union, the ILWU is the best protection we have for decent wages and conditions—and it provides a safe haven for workers in a hostile environment controlled by employers and legislators who by and large care nothing about the well-being of working people.

I cannot emphasize this enough. Organizing is the life-blood of any union, but especially ours. We need the constant influx of new members because the bosses never stop trying to minimize or eliminate us. We lose members through automation, from plant closures and runaway shops and to the fluctuations of the market.

Organizing is our counter-strategy—the only way we have to counteract the bosses’ shifting permanently to the bosses. Organizing is the leverage we use in the daily tug-of-war between people and profit.

The big question before this convention is: Who gets in, who gets out of this organizing? The answer to this has two parts. The first one will be in the budget this assembly passes. The second one will be about organizing—and about what we do the local unions and the regions of the IBU.

The work of this convention will determine the future of our union. The work of this convention will determine the future of our union. Who gets in, who gets out of this organizing is the biggest question. It’s an awesomely responsibility to organize in the 20th century.

*EXCERPTS FROM THE KEYNOTE SPEECH BY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT BRIAN McWILLIAMS*
Sharing history, knowledge, solidarity

Convention delegates heard leaders from the ILWU ranks, from the rest of the U.S. labor movement and from linked struggles around the world.

Linda Chavez-Thompson
Vice President, AFL-CIO

“We all know we have to work very hard because we all know what’s going to happen to us. The only guarantee we have about the future is that we won’t stay the way we are. Either we’re going to be a good deal larger or a good deal smaller.

“We have chosen to be larger. That’s why we are aiming to create a culture of organizing throughout the entire labor movement, not just your union, but throughout the 13 million members represented in the AFL-CIO. We must change to fit a new tomorrow for ourselves and for our working families in this country and that is to organize, organize and organize. That has to be our everyday language.”

Akinobu Itoh
Assistant General Secretary
All Japan Dockworkers’ Union

“In the globalizing economic trend, the attacks made by shipping companies have also become international. There is no way left for us longshoremen than to strengthen global solidarity and stand firm against this tide. The success we have achieved through the International Day of Action on January 20th was the first step. Let us join our hands in fighting against deregulation, privatization and casualization in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers.”

Bobby Morton
Merseyside Port Shop Stewards Committee
Liverpool, England

“Of the two major questions asked of us by journalists, the first one is, knowing what you know now, if you were faced with this picket line again, after 19 months of deprivation, after intimidation, after seeing our children starve, would you be prepared to cross that picket line? The answer is very, very swift. No, not under any circumstances would a Liverpool dockworker cross a picket line. That will never happen.”

Governor Ben Cayetano
Governor of Hawaii

“I speak to many groups, but speaking to organized labor is truly a privilege because I am a child of a family whose members were part of organized labor. My mother, for example, worked in the pineapple fields and was a member of the ILWU. My father, both my father and mother actually, were also hotel workers. I was a member of two unions. I was an electrician apprentice and a member of the IBEW way back in 1959 and 1960 and I was also a state worker and joined the HDA. So I know, I believe, and I’ve experienced some of the travails and challenges that working people face in their every day lives and it has shaped my philosophy and my values and the kinds of things I’ve stood for during my political career.”

Kent Wong
Executive Director
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance

“The history of the ILWU is also Asian American labor history. The proud tradition here in Hawaii marked the first time Asian workers in this country were organized into unions.”

Curtis McClain
Former ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer

“Let me leave you with something I learned while vacationing on a farm many years ago. My cousin and I were walking down a road. He was very good with a whip. So there was a wasp and he was going to demonstrate how good he was with that whip. Thack! Killed the wasp. I said, “Gee, you’re good.” And he said, “I’ll try it one more time and then I’ll let you try it.” Lo and behold, there’s a wasp. Thack! And he destroyed it. So here’s a funny little thing that I being a city boy don’t know much about and I saw these wasps flying around it and I said “Give me that whip.” And he said, “No, those little wasps up there are organized. Don’t fool around.”

Jimmy Herman
ILWU International President Emeritus

“As we look back upon the greatness of the union, it is to figure how we can go forward, do things differently, do things better so that the people that we are—the working class—can make this organization a better lot. How we can mobilize the young people assembled out there and transmit the message to them that the more they struggle, the more they support the union, the more affection we will have for each other. The less we care about personal rewards, the better the life will be for everybody that we take pride in representing and speaking for.

“Today the fight in this country is to hold to what we have knowing full well the chances are slim that the fight will be won unless we understand that there has to be some ass kicked, the Marquis of Queensbury rules go down the gutter, and we stand up and assert what is ours under the banner of our union.”
Following McWilliams' keynote speech (see page C-2), the delegates heard from AFL-CIO Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, the nation's highest-ranking woman union official and the first person of color to hold the vice-presidential position. The AFL-CIO is urging all its member unions to allocate more money and resources to organizing, Chavez-Thompson said, challenging the ILWU to join in and dedicate one-third of its budget to organizing.

Then came Mark Splain, Director of the Western Region of the AFL-CIO and former West Coast Director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute.

"Corporate America has mounted a deliberate and systematic campaign to deunionize the country and unions have failed to devote the financial and human resources needed for serious organizing."

which has trained hundreds of new organizers. Although millions of new workers have been employed in the last 15 years, few have been organized into unions, Splain pointed out. This has led to an almost 15 percent decrease in real wages for American workers. Big business and unions share responsibility for this trend, Splain said. Corporate America has mounted a deliberate and systematic campaign to deunionize the country and that has failed to be taken in and devote the financial and human resources needed for serious organizing.

Splain also noted that federal labor law reform is not on the horizon and the costs, the obstacles, and the rhetoric to reality the International organizers to make serious organizing. The increase is necessary to continue funding the organizing program now that the 2-4-24 assessment has expired. Under 2-4-24 each U.S. mainland member paid $2 per month for 24 months to build a fund for serious organizing. The increase is necessary to continue funding the organizing program now that the 2-4-24 assessment has expired. Under 2-4-24 each U.S. mainland member paid $2 per month for 24 months to build an organizing war chest. The monthly per capita would rise from $5.10 to $5.40 for members making $16 per hour or less, from $7.00 to $10.15 for those making between $16 and $21 per hour, and from $9.90 to $15.15 for those making more than $21 per hour. Subtracting $2 per month for the expired 2-4-24 assessment, the lowest tier members actually will see a decrease in monthly payments. The middle tier will get a small increase, and the upper tier, including longshore, hospital, general trades and the ILWU, will pitch in the lion's share of funds for the organizing program.

In an attempt to make some cost cuts at the International level, the Officers and the IEB proposed going back to pre-1994 numbers on the per capita.

THE RESOLUTIONS

A series of resolutions passed by the Convention affirms the ILWU's commitment to organizing and sets out the steps to make that happen (see page C-6, Resolutions P-1-5). "To ward an Aggressive ILWU Organizing Program," Resolution P-4, renews the 1994 Convention's mandate to make organizing the union's top priority and outlines the practical steps to be taken in the next three years. P-5, "ILWU Commitment to Organizing," allocates no less than 30 percent of the International's per capita income to organizing efforts.

Other resolutions instruct the union to focus new organizing in areas that bolster existing ILWU-organized industries, to draw new organizers from the ranks of qualified members with expertise in their own particular industries and regions (P-1), and to make organizing longshore, warehouse and tow boat and barges jobs on Washington state's Duamish River a top priority (P-3). The Duamish River serves as the loading base for most Alaska- and Hawaii-bound cargo that moves by barge. Most Duamish towboat and stevedore operations are non-union and compete directly with ILWU/IBU operations at the Port of Seattle.

The Convention also passed a resolu-
The international nature of the fight to maintain union work conditions has never been clearer, as several dockers from around the world face attacks from the same shipping companies, and compared his country's attempts to deregulate its ports to the struggle of the Liverpool dockers in his call for international solidarity.

Three Russian trade unionists also came to the Convention: Vladimir Vassiliev, President of the Dockers' Union of Russia; Vladimir Reksha, presiding unopposed, as is Secretary-Treasurer Joe Ibarra read a message from President of the Dockers' Vladivostok Leonid Hoshijo. Hoshijo, running unopposed, has an early lead.

According to the ILWU Constitution, local unions must pay to become official members, unless they are exonerated for further international organizing. Delegates from other locals were less sympathetic, and noted that Local 26 had been exonerated for its debts. Delegates from other locals that can't pay for further international organizing are allowed to remain in the federation in their current condition.

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Three Russian trade unionists also came to the Convention: Vladimir Vassiliev, President of the Dockers' Union of Russia; Vladimir Reksha, president of the Dockers' Vladivostok local, and Vadim Ivanov, Deputy Director of Foreign Relations for the Seafarers Union of Russia. The Dockers' Union started in 1992 with 3,000 members and has grown to 8,000, Vassiliev told the delegates. Now the dockers are dealing with job losses. They need to cultivate contacts with other workers and learn from their experiences with the multi-national corporations the Russian unions are tugging with for the first time.

Michel Murray, president of Syndicat des Débardeurs (Union of Steve

To help move organizing from rhetoric to reality the International Officers and the IEB fashioned a new budget proposal raising the per capita for the first time in six years and mandating that 30 percent of that go into organizing.
The 1994 International Convention completely revamped the election procedures for Internationals. The Titled Officers fully supported these changes adopted at the 1994 Convention but are concerned that there is a lack of clarity that may need to be cleaned up.

The intent of the round of negotiations was to restrict contributions in campaign for Internationals. This was intended to keep the locals from having any relationship to the ILWU from influential sources. The Titled Officers strongly recommend that the Constitution be amended to clarify that the International Executive Board may accept campaign contributions from the locals.

The revised election procedures provided for the committees to disclose financial information. However, there is no requirement that the contribution statements be treated as confidential, as they should since they are sensitive to the candidates' supporters. We recommend that the Constitution be amended to clarify that the campaign disclosure statement is financial disclosures.

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2-4-24 assessment information and discussion

slowed implementation of the organizing procedures for evaluating possible organizing targets were put into place so that organizing funds would be available for organizing. The flexibility in administering the organizing expenses can change dramatically and cannot be used for other purposes.

organizing has become the unequivocal top priority; 

...must be addressed by the 30th ILWU Convention... we each make a commitment individually to provide free childcare for workers' families...

RESOLVED: That the ILWU strongly and vigorously recommend to the President of the United States that the money... considered children of organized workers...

RESOLVED: That the ILWU strongly support the concept, standards and principles of Social Security insurance system to the economy... to assist our brothers and sister in Liverpool...

RESOLVED: That the ILWU endorse... and work with locals on specific drives, to develop... organizing activity increased...

...due to downsizing, technology, and local layoffs...

The accumulation of funds for organizing is required due to... organizations and labor unions to fight efforts to privatize and reduce jobs and organized labor's role in the community and socially conscious organizations...

RESOLVED: That the ILWU coalesce with their locked-out brothers and sisters...

RESOLVED: That the ILWU offer its... from... working families... Congress is considering... and working families... the United States Congress led by Representative Jane Harman (D-CA) and... working families...

RESOLVED: That the ILWU continue to support the concept, standards and principles of Social Security insurance system to the economy... to assist our brothers and sister in Liverpool and their families...

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Convention honors Abba Ramos

“I'm not retiring from the struggle, sisters and brothers. You can call me anytime. I still got a few good kicks left and I'm saving some for the bosses out there.”
—Abba Ramos

International Representative

What's in a Name?

A RESOLUTION FOR A GENDER-NEUTRAL NAME CHANGE

WHEREAS: The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) has a strong record of supporting rights issues, and their Union's name made them feel recognized and their appreciation for the union's name.

RESOLVED: That the change be so as not to incur additional expenses to replace office supplies that are already printed, and that the new name shall be the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

D espite constant discouragement, two ranks and file women from the Islandboatmen's Union wouldn't let go of their idea. They proposed that the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union make its name gender-neutral—get rid of the "men's" suffix. But many women would feel included and bring other women workers. Then several men were sponsored as an activist for the union. A few workers said this led to his retirement. He will find ways to share his experience and knowledge about the labor movement, international solidarity, and community activism with young people in school and in workplaces.

This 1997 Convention of the ILWU extends its best wishes and deepest gratitude to Abba Ramos, with the hope that in his retirement he will find ways to share his experience and commitment with new generations of workers and ILWU members.

Lila Smith
The Longshore Caucus takes care of business

BY STEVE STALLONE

True to tradition, the April 14-18 Longshore Division Caucus rocked with raucous speeches, raucous debates and partisan politicking.

But in the long run the Caucus passed a Coast Committee Report that everyone decided they could live with, even if no one agreed with it totally. The Caucus also approved a new budget with a per capita increase, passed seven new resolutions and nominated candidates for Coast Committee.

The longest debate revolved around approval of the Coast Committee Report. Only three of four Committee members signed the report: President Brian McWilliams, Vice President, Mainland Rich Austin and Coast Committeeeman Glen Ramiskey. The fourth, Coast Committeeman Richard Olson, had not attended meetings to prepare it or contributed feedback to the preliminary drafts. Instead Olson presented a "minority report" on the first day of the Caucus that precipitated days of debate on the differences between the two documents.

Eventually the Caucus incorporated most of the language of the minority report into its final document, but it referred Olson's two main proposals for further study. His first was to establish a new Coast Pro Rata Board of Trustees to pass around some of the longshore finances from the Coast Committee members and the Budget Committee. The second would add a new Coast Benefits Officer/Trustee who would oversee the longshore benefit program passed through the committee with Olson's two main proposals for further study. His first was to establish a new Coast Pro Rata Board of Trustees to pass around some of the longshore finances from the Coast Committee members and the Budget Committee. The second would add a new Coast Benefits Officer/Trustee who would oversee the longshore benefit program passed through the committee with Olson's two main proposals for further study.

By Thursday evening, the newly extended Caucus members signed the report: President Brian McWilliams, Vice President, Mainland Rich Austin and Coast Committeeeman Glen Ramiskey. The fourth, Coast Committeeman Richard Olson, had not attended meetings to prepare it or contributed feedback to the preliminary drafts. Instead Olson presented a "minority report" on the first day of the Caucus that precipitated days of debate on the differences between the two documents.

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At the request of the committee, the Caucus upped its budget to $50,000, an increase of $31,240, so its members can attend meetings of the National Safety Council and MA-

INTERNATIONAL GUESTS

The Longshore Caucus continued its history of international solidarity

with visits and speeches from other dockers' unions. Bobby Morten and Tony Nelson of the striking Liverpool dockers again thanked the ILWU for its support, especially its participation in the January 20 Day of Solidarity. Morten pointed out that the ILWU action on the West Coast cost the employers a half a billion dollars, yet no one was sued. "I think the reason for this was that they thought there might be such a backlash that things would never be the same," he said.

Michel Murray, President of the Syndicat des Debardeurs (Union of Stevedores) for the Port of Montreal, told delegates about a Labour Code change the Canadian government was considering (see story page 4) that would give employers the right to hire outside the union hall. He compared his union's situation to that of the Canadian government was considering (see story page 4) that would give employers the right to hire outside the union hall. He compared his union's situation to that of the

The Caucus passed a motion to send a delegation to the May International Dockers Conference in Montreal

The budget committee also presented its report on the Division's finances and its proposal for a longshore per capita increase. This proposal, along with amendments from the floor, raised Caucus members' monthly dues from $19 to $22.

COAST COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

A proposal to raise the salary of the Coast Committee members provoked more contention than anything but the Caucus approved it. It had Constitutional and budget implications and complications. Salaries for the three incumbent Coast President, Mainland, who according to the union's Constitution are both members of the Coast Committee, both depend on a formula in the Constitution which can only be changed by the full Convention, not just by a Longshore Division Caucus. Also, MCA undertook a campaign against privatization and casualization will be held in Miami in June.

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But later that day Local 12 came up with a new proposal. It would give a $1,500 per month "housing al-

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COSH (Maritime Advisory Committee for Occupational Health and Safety). The budget committee also presented its report on the Division's finances and its proposal for a longshore per capita increase. This proposal, along with amendments from the floor, raised Caucus members' monthly dues from $19 to $22.

Coast Committeeeman Glen Ramiskey makes a point during a Caucus debate.

Banking robbers ride again

The banking industry is after your money and your jobs.

The American Bankers Association has targeted the breakup of the nation's credit unions as its top priority for 1997. Historically credit unions have given people with small amounts of money—working people, union members and union locals—a way to meet their financial and credit needs.

"Members [pool their money] and lend it out in a credit union," said Leon Harris of ILWU Warehouse Local 6. "It's a family type arrangement that doesn't screen as closely as a bank," he said. Credit union members enjoy higher rates on savings, lower rates on loans and smaller fees than regular banks offer. More than 67 million Americans belong to some 13,000 credit unions—among them 22,500 people in eight ILWU credit unions on the Coast.

"Without credit unions people would be at the mercy of the big banking associations," said Harris, who also chair of the board of the ILWU-FSC Credit Union in Oakland, California.

Credit unions do not pay federal corporate income tax since they provide financial services in a democratic, not-for-profit, cooperative manner—i.e., with member ownership and control. Banks say the tax exemption gives credit unions an unfair advantage, and want to limit who can benefit from them. This would force more people to have to rely on banks for their financial needs, giving bankers one more way to transfer wealth from working people to their own pockets.

The banking industry filed numerous lawsuits to deny consumers access to credit unions. It finally got the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to rule by July 1996 that federal credit unions may no longer add new members who were not a part of their original membership group.

Many people join credit unions through their place of employment, and over time businesses close and workers are laid off. "If credit unions can't add new members, they are sentenced to die with the fluctuations of the market," said Henry Kertman of the California Credit Union League (CCUL).

The U.S. Supreme Court announced February 24 it will review the membership issue raised in this case, although no date has been set for the hearing. The court will most likely wait until its new term begins in October to resolve the matter and a decision may not be handed down until as late as this time next year.

If the banks get their way many union locals and millions of union members who joined existing credit unions would be forced out and no longer be able to benefit from the superior services of credit unions.

Union locals not already part of a credit union would be unable to join one, and the cost and complexity of starting a new one requires more members and capital than most locals have.

May is medical, dental choice month

"Active and retired longshore families in ports where members have a choice can change medical plans during an open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 1997. The change will be effective July 1, 1997. San Francisco, Los Angeles and Portland/Vancouver active and retired longshore workers, may change dental plans during the month of May.

Medical Choice: The medical choice is Kaiser or BlueCross "BlueShield Plan and Choice Port Plan for Southern California locals 33, 26, 29, 63 and 94; Northern California locals 93, 8, 33, (SF), 34 (Stockton), 54, 75 and 91; and Oregon/Columbia River locals 4, 9, 40, and 92.

In the Washington area the choices for locals 19, 23, 42, 73, 58 and 98 are the Group Health Cooperative and the Choice Port Plan. Local catchmen will have a choice of plans effective July 1, 1997, under their July 1, 1996 contract.

North Bend/Coos Bay Local 12, Longview Local 21 and Astoria Local 50 will have a choice of plans effective July 1, 1997 under provisions of the July 1, 1996 contract. A notice explaining the change and a choice form for selection of the desired health plan is being mailed directly to members who are owners and retires with eligibility in these plans.


Information on the dental/medical plans, and forms to change plans, can be obtained at the locals and the ILWU-PMF Benefit Plans office. All locals 19, 23, 32, 47, 52 and 98 are active and retired longshore families. The candidates for the chair for Harry Bridges at the University of Washington because I want Harry's memory and what he stood for to live on. I feel equally strong about Paul Robeson.

Richard D. Neill Past member ILWU Local 1291 Cape May Court House, NJ 08720

Updated International elections

CANDIDATE LIST
International President: Brian McWilliams (International President), Larry Wing (1993 contract). A notice explaining the change and a choice form for selection of the desired health plan is being mailed directly to members who are owners and retires with eligibility in these plans.

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Postage stamp campaign to honor Paul Robeson Centennial

Paul Robeson had the same enemies as Harry Bridges. The same people who wanted to bury Bridges have succeeded in burying Paul Robeson. I contributed to the Chair for Harry Bridges at the University of Washington because I want Harry's memory and what he stood for to live on. I feel equally strong about Paul Robeson.

The ILWU should endorse this Paul Robeson Centennial U.S. Postage Stamp Campaign to help keep the spirit of a past warrior alive, and to pay tribute to a true champion for justice.
The Harry Bridges Institute (HBI) named Jesse and Lois Stranahan of Oregon as posthumous recipients of its Cesar Chavez Labor Trib-ute. The Institute, founded in 1989 to promote labor education, gives the annual award to individuals who've made outstanding contributions to the labor movement. At its March 22 banquet in San Pedro, the Institute also honored seven local ILWU labor heroes: Hector Cepeda, Sr., warehouse Local 28; Phillip Graveti, clerks Local 63; Jack McCracken, IBU; Linda Palacios, longshore Local 13; Miguel "Mike" Salcido, walking bosses Local 94; Luverene "Chick" Loveridge and Ruben Negrete of Local 11, posthumously.

Both Stranahans have more than a half-century of involvement in labor and social justice causes. Jesse's activism dates from the 1930s, and from 1938-1940 he wrote for the Portland CIO paper. Following in his father's footsteps, he started work on the waterfront as a clerk in 1942, and got his union book in ILWU Local 40 in 1946. He served on the parity committee of all the major coastwise strikes 1946-1948, and 1971-72. On transfer to Local 83 in Wilmington, California during 1953-54, he served one year on the Southern California District Council. He also sat on the Columbia River Area District Council in the 1950s and 60s, and was a regular correspondent for The Dispatcher.

A strong believer in coalition building, Jesse took on a range of work with other labor and progressive organizations. He was a Fraternal De-legate to the First Constitutional Con-vention of the United Farm Workers in Fresno, California in 1973, and has continued to work in solidarity with the UFW. On the HBI's Columbia River Area Committee, he works with representatives of several unions, espe-cially teachers, to bring labor edu-cation to the younger genera-tions.

Since re-tiring from the ILWU in 1980, Jesse has played an active role in the Pacific Coast Pen-sioners' Asso-ciation (PCPA) locally and coast-wise, and in several senior citizens' and environmen-tal groups and the Labor Party as well.

Lois Stranahan went from work-ing with (and organizing) waitresses to working in the Portland shipyards as a member of the Steamfitters Union. After World War II she worked as a telephone operator and helped organize phone company workers into the Communications Workers of America, participating in the 1948 strike.

A 30-year member of the ILWU Aux-iliary, Lois has taken photographs for The Dispatcher and participated ac-

tively in the PCPA. Since the grape boycott in 1965, she has vigorously backed the UFW. She won a major First Amendment legal decision up-holding labor's right to leaflet, petition and picket in certain public places.

"We were really pleased to be-are to share the award with the other honorees and everyone who was at the banquet," said Lois. Some 450 people attended, among them re-presentatives of almost all the ILWU locals and the ILWU International, as well as eight members of the PCPA. Co-Chairman Glen Ramis-keey presented the Stranahans' award. Jesse's friends and colleagues got a sharp scare at the Interna-tional Convention when he collapsed at the microphone while speaking on the Labor Party resolution. He was rushed to a Kaiser hospital in Honolulu where he was diagnosed with congestive heart fail-ure and congestive pulmonary edema, and given observation for three days. Now he's home in Portland with in-structions to take it easy and keep an eye on him that might be hard to take. Lois said, "We didn't retire, we just went off the employer's payroll," she added.

For more information on the Harry Bridges Institute, call (503) 593-2927 (main office), (310) 831-2397 (South-ern California Area Committee), or (503) 252-7446 (Columbia River Chap-ter).

—biographical information courtesy of HBI

Local 13's Jackie McCoy joins all-time greats

By BRUCE BEBB

Members of the ILWU and the box-ing fraternity alike were saddened as word spread of Jackie McCoy's death January 13. McCoy succumbed to cancer in an Anaheim hospital at age 78.

The son of a first-generation Cypriot, McCoy was born and raised in Los An-geles. He started boxing as an am-ateur in the 1930s and con-tinued through the '40s, meeting such world champions as Harold Dade and Manuel Ortiz in non-title match-es. Before leav-ing the ring he began training other fighters, and for nearly 50 years trained and managed dozens of top-notch boxers, in-cluding five world champi-ons: featherweight Raul Rojas, lightweights Carlos Fuentes, Chuck Gonzalez and Mando Ramos, and welterweights Carlos Fuentes, Don Johnson. In 1985 he was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame.

By AL PERISHO

Another of the strong men of the early, hard struggle days of the ILA and ILWU has passed on. John Martin Fiesel died April 1 after a long bout with can- cer. He was 87.

John was born in 1899 in Wilmington, California, ninth of eleven children from a hard-working pio-neer farming family in the Harbor. At 23, John left the farm and started longshoreing in San Pedro. He joined the ILA orga-nizing campaign in 1933, working on a shoveling gang, mostly at Berth 176 in Wilming-ton for "Haywire," American Hawaiian Deck. He became an ardent activist, building union support among the men. John was present when company goons at-tacked and killed two of our own dur-ing the 1934 strike.

John transferred to the Marine Clerks in 1944, served several terms as Presi-dent/Business agent of Local 63 between 1950 and 1971, and retired in 1972.

Those who knew John knew him as a strong-minded indi-vidual, a "true be-liever" and best supporter of Harry Bridges. He served on several International Bridges Defense Defense Defense Com-mitees and was an aggressive advo-cate for Harry in those pre-WWII days of the 1950s. John was a true salt of the earth, and is sorely missed.

Jesse and Lois Stranahan

Jesse Stranahan

John Fiesel: A true believer passes on

John Fiesel—biographical information courtesy of HBI
Strikes snarl Brazil's ports

Brazilian dockworkers' long-running resistance to casualization flared this month in a general strike that paralyzed Santos, the country's largest port. The Santos strike ran from April 2-5, then resumed April 15 and still held at press time. Strikes gripped all 18 Brazilian ports April 4, 16 and 17, as workers around the country walked off to support the Santos action.

The Sao Paolo Steel Company, COSIPA, provoked the outburst by announcing that it would load ships in Santos using non-union labor. After negotiations between the company and the dockworkers broke down, 25 workers occupied two ships, the Marcos Dias and the Vancouverer, April 2, defending their right to work.

"The workers are not against modernization," they wrote in an April 8 press release. "What the workers wish is that such a process not be imposed without negotiation, but with time to take into account the enormous social liabilities it would represent." They want to hold COSIPA to the Brazilian Law of the Ports and the International Labor Organization's Convention 137. Both stipulate that all work in the ports be given to registered port workers.

Mass demonstrations bolstered the occupation. Some 500 people camped in front of the COSIPA terminal gates beginning April 1, and 1,000 rallied in the center of Santos April 10.

The company called for military intervention to end the occupation. Federal police assaulted the Vancouverer and the Marcos Dias at 4 a.m. April 15, arresting all 25 occupiers. This marked the first use of force against workers in their jobs, an action the strikers called "a perverse and ironic inversion of what always occurs in strikes."

Police released the occupiers quickly after questioning. Negotiations resumed April 16, but the Port of Santos remained at a standstill. Fifteen ships were queued up waiting to get into the harbor, and another 18 were stuck inside.

The Santos workers are asking supporters to fax or e-mail Brazilian President Fernando Enrique Cardoso, urging him to encourage restraint by the military and police, and reminding him of the worldwide backing for the dockers' struggle.

Fax: (55 61) 226 7566. E-mail: pmplanalto.gov.br


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Japanese dockers fight privatization

Dockworkers throughout the Japanese port system are fighting the latest attempts of world capital to destroy their union and their livelihoods. Dockers held workshops January 20 at 50 member ports in support of the Liverpool workers and joined, 600 strong, in a demonstration February 14 at the Ministry of Transport.

Dockers also conducted a 24-hour strike at 43 ports March 12. This strike halted nearly all loading and unloading in a protest against U.S. pressure to open Japanese port services to "greater competition," i.e., privatization. In the beginning of March, the dockers stopped Sunday work, and they have refused night work since March 1.

At the heart of the dispute is the attempt by the U.S. Federal Maritime Commission and the European Union, the latter through the World Trade Organization, to force the Japanese government to eliminate the process of "prior consultation." Currently the Japan Harbor Transportation Association, representing stevedores and shipping companies, negotiates with the unions, through which working conditions are settled, and assigns ports and stevedore companies to each ship. This places a great deal of power in the hands of Shiro Takashima, the 83-year old head of the association, which oversees $669 billion in trade. Balancing his power are unions, including the All Japan Dockworkers' Union, which have fought for and won decent living standards for their workers.

"We wouldn't call the system perfect. But we need a guaranteed system that helps protect our working conditions," Hiroaki Nakas of the 44,000-member National Council of Dockworkers' Unions of Japan was quoted saying in the Asahi Evening News.

The U.S. Federal Maritime Commission had threatened a $100,000 per ship penalty against any Japanese ship calling at a U.S. port in order to press for an agreement on privatization. Including the prior agreement between U.S. FMC and the Japanese government is a provision in the licensing foreign company to perform dock work.

The proposed agreement directly threatens the Dockers' Act, which the ILWU supported through Harry Bridges at the Pacific and Asian Dockworkers' Conference held in Tokyo in 1969. The ILWU took part in the boycott of Japanese shipping, and the All Japan Dockworkers' Union soon won passage of the Dockers Act.

The Japanese government has traditionally shown restraint against any interference in labor disputes, but the keepers of the New World Economic Order have no such compulsions.

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Women of the Waterfront on U.S. tour

Doreen MacNally of Women of the Waterfront (R) and Ida Heidtman from Australia at the International Dockers Conference in Liverpool, Aug. 31-Sept. 1, 1996.

Wives, partners and daughters of the striking Liverpool dockers started Women of the Waterfront to help organize support for the strike, which has now gone on for more than a year and a half. Two leading members of W.O.W., Colette Melia and Susan Mitchell, will be on the West Coast in late April and early May as part of their three-week U.S. tour. You can hear them May 3, 7 p.m. at the HERE Local 11 hall, 321 S. Bixel St., Los Angeles and May 4 at ILWU warehouse Local 6, 99 Hegemon Rd., Oakland. More info: Los Angeles, Marc Rich, (818) 666-1147; Bay Area, Labor Video Project, (415) 282-1908.

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