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Globalization and international unionism

By Brian McWilliams

ILWU International President

Having returned recently from the International Transport Workers Federation’s (ITF) 39th International Congress in New Delhi, India, where I was accompanied by ILWU-Canada President Tom Dufrene, I have much important and exciting news to report back to our membership.

As an international transportation union organization the ITF is an important organization for the ILWU to participate in, especially as the era of national economies is coming to a close. More and more capital is flowing freely across national borders seeking out lower costs and higher profits. And more and more this is putting workers in competition with each other.

The only response to capital going international is for workers to organize internationally, to support each other, create worldwide wage and working condition standards and enforce those with international solidarity. Coordinating these efforts with their counterparts around the world is what the ITF does and is why it is so important for the ILWU, and especially our Longshore Division which is so dependent on international solidarity, to support.

The ITF Congress spent much time reviewing recent struggles and the ITF’s role in supporting the Maritime Workers Union of Australia. John Maitland, National Secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Australia and Vice President of the International Federation of Chemical Energy, and General Workers (ICEM), addressed the Congress and commented on the importance of the international action in support of the MUA and the media coverage of them.

"We sent out a radio report that was picked up by the media. We were able to end a strike that had been going for weeks," Maitland said. "The debate was also occurring in the media in terms of how much power workers have when they are in union. They've just filed with the NLRB for a recog-nition election.

And if drug addicts occupy the lowest rung on America's economic ladder, those who care to treat them, it seems, are not deemed much better by others. The main issue of The Counselors at Addiction Research and Treatment center in San Francisco has turned to Local 6's West Bay unit to gain the respect their hard work has earned, and to establish a drug-free community.

As always, read 'em and don't leave 'em on the commuter trains.

NEPTUNE JADE VICTORY

Congratulations to everyone in the ILWU, especially the Longshore Division, for a victorious conclusion to the Neptune Jade saga (see page 3). As in every struggle this big top, the success of the ILWU is dependent on the support of everyone. People who participate, who participate actively. It is the only way we can make progress.

Port COMMISSIONERS EVERYWHERE

In our last issue, while announcing the new ILWU-Canada President Brian McWilliams has been appointed to the San Francisco Port Commission, we listed other ILWU members who serve on port commissions elsewhere in the Coast. But we inadvertently left out Dick Wise in Portland, Charles Olliver in Eureka and Jesse Ramirez in Port Huemne. We apologize for the oversight.

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Big ILWU Victory

PMA finally drops Neptune Jade lawsuit

By Steve Stallone

After a year of witch hunting, PMA and individual member compa-

gies agreed to drop the Neptune Jade lawsuit on the eve of the court hear-

ing. Judge Needham, Jr. tossed out PMA's motion for a first Amend-

dent. The Neptune Jade struggle entitled "The World is

Our Right to

Honor Picket Lines"


San Francisco bike messengers descended on their usual gathering spot in
downtown at noon the day before Thanksgiving. But instead of having lunch,
the bikers assembled to present a large paper-

made turkey to the messenger company who treated them with great disrespect,
and many of the bikes are paid below mini-
mum wage. There have also been allega-
tions of sexual harassment.

It struck at the very soul of the ILWU,
our ability to act in solidarity with
people in the community could be
attacked on the essence of the ILWU
and the principles it was founded on
and not just something related to
negotiations.

"Tonight I'm going to do what
PMAs been trying to make me do for
a year," he laughed ironically. "I'm
going to name names.

They don't respect their riders," Piper
said. "That's the real reason to organize. Advanced keeps wages down and that pressures other companies to do the same to compete. It sets an abusive precedent in the industry.

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"It was never about the money," Heyman said. "I just thought PMA
would hurt where it hurts them and pay for harassing people over
their First Amendment rights. But I
decided to give it up if it gets Robert
and everyone else off the hook."

At a victory celebration at Local
10 Dec. 4 Irminger finally spoke
freely.

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He went on to thank one by one—
and by name—everyone he could
recall who planned or walked the
picket line.

The Neptune Jade Defense
Committee is producing a video docu-
mentary on the history of the Neptune
Jade struggle entitled "The World is
Our Picket Line: The Saga of the
Neptune Jade." It will use footage
from the picket line and interviews
with participants, footage of the
Liverpool dockers and their families
as well as interviews with and music
by Billy Bragg and Chumbawamba.
The Defense Committee is soliciting
donations to help cover production
costs. Send them to: The Neptune
Jade Defense Committee / PO Box
2574 / Oakland, CA 94614.

Messengers pick turkey employer

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Labor is election's winner

By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

A Republican poll watcher in New York City was waiting at his station on election day at 6:45 a.m.—15 minutes before the polls opened. He expected to see the leisure class sauntering up to the voting station to cast their ballots at any moment. But that was not to be. Instead, a van full of union folks parked in front of the station with early voters, one guy still in his pajamas.

"Oh hell, these sorry working folks couldn't drag themselves out of bed. It's going to be a bad day in New York for Republicans," thought the poll watcher who it was.

Working people defied history and confounded the pollsters this election year. Headlines around the country blared, "Labor big winner in election." The Labor movement has rediscovered good old fashioned door to door, face to face, grassroots political muscle that at its core involves the labor movement and how to use it.

In two days of debate on how best to use its power, the ILWU Longshore Caucus voted to rescind the Division's negotiating positions is 1999. The Caucus adjourned with the vote of no confidence in the President of the whole union.

On finances the Caucus passed a proposal presented by the Budget Committee to increase the monthly investment Subcommittee and transferred its responsibilities to the Full Board of Trustees. If PMA does not agree to this motion, there will be no meetings or actions of the Investment Subcommittee. Additionally, the International President will notify PMA by letter that the Mainland Vice President will henceforth be involved in all Pension Trustee functions.

2. The caucus will be the only body that can amend and adjust this agreement.

3. The trustees are to elect a new trustees chair.

The Caucus also voted to rescind the vote of no confidence in the International President it passed at its meeting last May and reaffirmed its support of McWilliams as President of the whole union.

In two days of debate on how best to serve the members of the Longshore Division and how to resolve a number of contentious issues on the Board of Directors, the Caucus decided to return to the locals. Our members in Washington State were instrumental in getting out the vote for Congressional winners Brian Baird and Jay Inslee, and for U.S. Senator Patty Murray. The state legislature of Washington changed from majority Republican to majority Democratic. Local 23 really geared up and raised thousands of dollars of contributions to the Political Action Fund from their members.

People in Washington State were instrumental in getting out the vote for Congressional winners Brian Baird and Jay Inslee, and for U.S. Senator Patty Murray. The state legislature of Washington changed from majority Republican to majority Democratic. Local 23 really geared up and raised thousands of dollars of contributions to the Political Action Fund from their members.

On a vote with near unanimity the Caucus passed a motion presented by International President Brian McWilliams as follows:

I. The International President will assign chairmanship of the Coast Caucus to the Mainland Vice President for his remaining term in office.

II. The Mainland Vice President can and may be assigned responsibilities outside the Longshore Division by the International President.

III. At the next ILWU-PMA Pension trustees meeting, the ILWU will move to eliminate the Investment Subcommittee and transfer its responsibilities to the Full Board of Trustees. If PMA does not agree to this motion, there will be no meetings or actions of the Investment Subcommittee. Additionally, the International President will notify PMA by letter that the Mainland Vice President will henceforth be involved in all Pension Trustee functions.

1. The caucus will be the only body that can amend and adjust this agreement.

2. The trustees are to elect a new trustees chair.

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On finances the Caucus passed a proposal presented by the Budget Committee to increase the monthly pro rata amount of pension payments of the locals by $10.81 per member/month for five months because of a shortage of funds caused by excessive legal expenses.

Then, to build up a strike fund of nearly a million dollars, the Caucus further increased the pro rata another $10 per member/month for five months and then $20 per member/month for the following three months. In the event a strike does not materialize, the money will be returned to the locals.

The Caucus adjourned with the feeling the Division is united and ready to face the employer in negotiations. The Contract Caucus to decide the Division's negotiating positions is scheduled to be held March 15-25, 1999.

The G.O.P.'s plan for the midterm elections turned out to be...well...rather...

...FLACCID.
Coast Education Project

The Coast Contract: strength through solidarity

"The history of the Pacific Coast shows that much of the trouble, and lack of organization and, therefore, much of the trou-
bles, bad conditions and so forth, were the result of no coastwise
design and no coastwise action."

-Harry Bridges testifying before the National Longshore
Board appointed by Roosevelt to adjudicate the 1948 strike.

The two pillars of the strength of the ILWU's Longshore Division have
always been the hiring hall and the coastwise contract, which
touches all longshore work along the Pacific Coast in California,
Oregon and Washington.

Since the coastwise agreements the ILWU has main-
tained its position as one of the nation's largest and most pro-
gressive unions. These coastwise collective bargaining agreements
between the ILU and the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) on
their uniform wage schedules, costs of benefits and griev-
ance procedures, are also a source of stability for the working
industries along the Pacific Coast.

East Coast longshoremen won the coast contract during the striking
of 1934. The new contract not only made tremendous
improvements in the working lives of longshore-
men and their families, it also
made possible the defense of those
conditions—and the strength and solidarity necessary
to improve wages and benefits for generations to come.

The grievance procedures estab-
lished in all longshore and port
contracts protect the rights of all longshore workers. Together with the
collectively bargained Pacific Coast
Maritime Safety Code (PCMSC), these
agreements provide a stable and safe-
ying working environment for the
entire waterfront work force.

But it wasn't always this way. Before 1934 waterfront employers—
both shippers and stevedoring companies—had the right to
in one port compete with workers in
neighborhood ports for work by driving
down wages and standards. The number of
workers on the job. Stevedoring companies would like-
wise use the longshoremen to force strikes by bidding
lower cost services at the expense of worker safety and wages.

Many longshoremen went without limit,
often to the point of total exhaust-
ion—and sometimes to death. When
longshoremen in one port would
organize and even strike for better
wages and conditions, the employer
shifted work to another port where
workers often welcomed the extra
work, even if it was at the expense
of the welfare of other workers. The
endless competition for work fueled
rivalries among longshore workers in
many ports.

But when, after World War II, new
union orga-
nization along the waterfront estab-
lished the International Longshore-
and Warehouse Union (ILA), a
coastwise contract was reached in the harbor
and established the coastwise agreement.

The ILWU longshore workers demonstrate in San Francisco during the 1948 strike—the last time the coastwise contract was challenged by employers.

When the smoke cleared both the ILA and shippers were bound by an award handed down by the National Longshore Board Oct. 12, 1934. The award established joint hiring halls, uniform wages, hours and conditions for the entire coast—
including coastwise grievance machinery for the settlement of dis-
putes by arbitration. This award became the basis for the coastwise collec-
tive bargaining between the union and the shippers. Despite some attempts by the employers to dissau-
det coastwise bargaining after 1934, the National Labor Relations Board
affirmed the legal basis for the coast contract in 1938, and it has remained
intact ever since.

The coast agreement is a living
document negotiated in a bottom-up,
democratic process. The members of
each local vote on contract proposals and
and elect delegates to take those pro-
posals to the Longshore Caucus, a
delegations officer, a collective body
elected by the mem-
ers of each longshore local. The
Longshore Caucus refines and com-
exposes the various proposals and then
elects representatives from the differ-
ent areas to the Negotiating Committee,
which presents them to the employers' committee. The
Negotiating Committee then returns
the agreement to the
members elected by the
local, and the union is responsible for
and subject to the content of the con-
tact.

While the members and the local
unions are bound together by the
democratic process each member
have a say in determining the
content of the contract.

The Coast contract is a living docu-
ment because it is the result of a
coastwise agreement which
contracts are not duplicated by the
ILA on the East and Gulf Coasts.

This article is the second in a
series about central issues in upcoming
coastwise contract negotiations, prepared by Steve Stallone, Dispatcher Editor,
and Gene Vrana, Associate Director of Education and ILWU librarian.

Benefits of Coastwise Contract

The West Coast Longshore Contract gives the union great
strength and the following benefits:

1. An industry-wide Health and
Welfare package.
2. An industry-wide pension.
3. Coastwise travel program and
30-day permits in visiting ports.
4. Voluntary Travel program.
5. Insurance against injury.
6. One door policy to ensure long-
shore transfer into clerks.
7. Coastwise safety.
8. Standardized work practices.
10. Coast transfers.

Pay Guarantee Program
11. One employer organization to
bargain with.
12. All trackage lines agree to
the same standards and contract in all ports,
cutting down on competition between
worker forces in each port.
13. The contract applies to all
ports, large and small.
14. The union's strength is in its
large, integrated front, and all
workers can be defended to ensure
outside employers do not create new
competitive sources of work.
15. The number one importance of
a coastwise contract is a unified
front against the employers.
ITF SAVES STARVING SAILORS—WITH LONGSHORE BACKUP

When the MV Phoenix Hope sailed into the Columbia River in the early morning of Nov. 6 and was met by the river pilot, the ship's bosun had a question for him: how did he know how to contact the ITF? The pilot did, and shortly after the vessel berthed at the Port of Vancouver, Wash. ITF Inspector Bob Dean was there. Dean boarded the Japanese-owned, Panamanian-flagged bulk carrier to find a Filipino crew under the command of a Japanese captain and chief engineer. Dean asked the captain for a copy of the crew's contract and asked if he had ever heard of the ship being covered by an ITF agreement. The captain produced an All Japan Seamen's Union contract, he said was only good for this trip.

Dean went down and asked the chief cook to show him the reefer. There had plenty of Japanese food for the two officers, but the other four for the ship was covered by an ITF agreement. Dean suggested they call him when they needed his seaman's book and passport for the bank. The second officer was extremely hungry the crew also blocked the gangway and put up a sign reading "On strike for unfair working conditions." 

Familathe mentioned the Coast Guard. "I told them they should detain the ship because, with the strike, there wasn't sufficient crew to meet "safe manning levels for the vessel," Familathe said. The Coast Guard immediately put the vessel on port detention. The ship's agent came down to the dock and started yelling at Familathe, claiming there was nothing wrong with the ship. Familathe asked him if he was aware of the physical abuse of the crew. In front of several Local 13 longshore workers the agent said that never happened and blamed it on the captain. Dean confronted the captain with the claim of abuse and the captain responded—again in front of several longshore worker witnesses—that he never hit crew members, that was the chief engineer.

Familathe credited the quick resolution to the Local 13 members who stayed with him through the negotiations. "Having the longshore presence made the agent and captain take the situation seriously," he said. "They were great guys." —Steve Stallone

AUCTION SALE PROVIDES BACKUP PAY FOR FOTINI CREW

The bulk carrier Fotini was aground as soon as sunk when the U.S. Coast Guard detained it at the Port of Long Beach in early October for gross violations of maritime safety regulations. Since then, at the request of the ITF, federal courts arrested the ship. The owners, Sea Gypsy Maritime Inc. of Panama and World Carrier Inc. of Greece, abandoned the ship. So magistrates auctioned it for scrap Dec. 5 to pay the crew and the嚓or's creditors. The bulk carrier Sea Diamond arrived Dec. 7 at the Port of Tacoma, with a load of Australian alumina bound for Kaiser's mill in town. A flotilla of small boats crewed by protestors came out to greet the vessel, at first causing it to anchor in Commencement Bay rather than tie up. Pickets also appeared on the dock from the IWW and the local of the United Steelworkers of America line, feeding the pickets good, hot food. 

Boaters supporting the pickets surrounded the Sea Diamond at anchor. Boats from the U.S. Coast Guard and fireboats came out to patrol the area and after some delay the ship tied up at Pier 7. At 5:30 a.m. police arrived to pull down Earth First! demonstrators who had scaled the 200 foot high crane and rappelled down it to hang a banner saying "Hurwitz cuts jobs just like he cuts trees." The climbers had made their ascent in the driving rain with temperatures barely above freezing. They had winds that almost blew them off their ropes, but held on to get the 40 by 50-foot dome out in a dramatic presentation. They were successful in getting national media attention on CNN and local television, radio and newspapers as well as slow traffic on Interstates 5 and 405.

"We thought the banner jumpers were going to be killed up there," said Local 13 business representative Monrad. "We thought they were dead for sure."

The banner finally came down late in the afternoon. Police made two arrests, but free passage was granted and cited five others on the same charge. The banner jumpers, Local 23 members dispatched to unload the alumina into large storage domes and then onto rail cars. Seeing

Most of money will go directly to creditors. The ITF estimates the sailors are owed in interest and for pay- ment, are owed $100,000. Other creditors, who advanced everything from water taxis to bunker oil, were left high and dry. ITF lawyers Phil Monrad and Rob Remar worked at greatly reduced rates, and the doctor who saved one of the crew from almost certain death from failing kidney disease was given a large mount of his fees.

The ship's captain had hoped to sneak into Long Beach harbor for a quick gas and-go Oct. 1. But the U.S. Coast Guard didn't think so. After examining the ship's documentation and discovering that there was no proper agreement between the captain and chief engineer, the coast guard ordered the ship to remain out of sight of land.

Familathe was there to greet it. The ship's agent said that never happened at all, and upset that the others had backed out, found a way to jump ship.
the USWA picket line they declined to cross it, but the company moved the ship off the dock to anchor and there would be no work that day. The pickets withdrew after making their point and the ship eventually came in to tie up.

With all the police activity arresting the Earth Firsters, the driving wind and rain and safety concerns due to damage to the conveyor belts that carry the cargo to storage, the Port Authority moved to close the area. Additional belt damage prevented unloading for another week.

"It's important for us to support any unionized workers in a struggle for wages and hours, but it's especially important because of the tactics Kaiser use to oust strikers," Lalicker said, "and the company used to oust strikers and bring in replacements." Local 23 President Lee Brash said, "We have a contract coming up too, so we know what it's like."

The International Management Assistance Corporation brings openly of its strike breaking services. They provided the scales and S3 trailers in which to house them on Kaiser property, and one goes to lock them in and guard them as well. What food they got and theouthouses they use all came from the "single source" company for scab herders. IMAC's sales literature claims their scab recruitment "may concentrate on depressed areas where companies may have laid off employees or closed facilities outright," a tactic that assures the most desperate replacement workers.

Kaiser workers at the Tacoma mill blast metallic aluminum off the alumina ore with high wattage electrical currents. Their hot and dangerous work is repeated in similar ways at half a dozen plants around the country where the 3100-person bargaining unit works. In the 1980s they gave up wages and benefits to keep the company going, with the promise of restoration when the company got back on its feet. In 1997 and 1998 the company scored record profits, but entered negotiations for the next contract with demands for a 12 percent cut in staffing.

"We were already working at 100 percent of the overtime allowed by state regulators," Lalicker said. "The state allows only 360 minutes a day in the plant environment, and we are already working that. The state realization that limit is too high." So nasty is the environment that workers must scrub particles off their skin or the sun will cause burns on exposure, he said. "The crystals in the pitch resect the sunlight, concentrating it, and the company complains about the need for showers."

Workers asked for a partial restoration of pay and benefits, but Kaiser wouldn't negotiate, forcing the strike. The scales have been doubled or tripled up on the jobs, Lalicker said, but still the turnover is high.

"You can't beat support like we've gotten from Local 23," he said. Lalicker praised the Earth First demonstrators and the coalition between environmentalists and unionists.

"For a long time the corporate giants have been trying to do a wedge between environmentalists and workers, saying we were responsible for job loss," Earth First! spokesman Joe Hall said. "But in reality, with trade agreements like NAFTA, jobs are leaving the country in the blink of an eye and it has nothing to do with environmentalists. What we want is long term sustainability, not short-term profitability. This was our chance to get out and say to working people: we are just like you, we have common goals."

—Tom Price

LOCAL 30 BORAX CONTRACT INKED

ILWU mining and mineral processing Local 30 in Boron, Calif. not only held off an attack from one of the world's most notorious union-busting conglomerates, but came away with a new contract that included wage and pension increases and more jobs for its members.

Local 30 workers dig borax out of an open pit mine and load it onto two hundred-ton, two-and-a-half-story tall trucks. Then it goes to rail cars, and much of that goes to Los Angeles where workers from chemical processing Local 20A load ships for overseas delivery. Boron is the main product, and it is used for everything from glass making to specialty steels, from space shuttle heat resistant tiles to soap, and more than a thousand products in between.

"The work is hot and dusty in the summertime and super cold in the winter," local President Ray Panter said. "The temperature in the Mojave Desert where the mine is located goes from more than 100 degrees in the summer to 19 degrees in the winter."

With the contract expiring Nov. 4, Panter led the bargaining team into negotiation. U.S. Borax Inc., a subsidiary of Rio Tinto mining, the largest mining company in the world, proposed dozens of wage and benefit take-aways and bargaining unit downsizing.

"Now there's a big borax operation in Turkey," Panter said. "So for the company it's global-this and global-chat, so that's some pressure on us."

Beginning with the first meeting Sept. 21, the bargaining team fought back against the take-aways and ended with three percent per year wage increases, added onto pay that is more than $20 an hour. Instead of losing members, 30 more were added to the 521 person unit. Negotiators hammered out a seven-dollar-per-year of service pension plan increase and made other gains in vacations and sub-pay for less senior members.

The support of the International and the Southern California ILWU locals helped Local 30 get through, just as it added Local 20A in its recent bargaining.

"We had a rally Oct. 20 with the presidents of locals 20A, 26, 63 and 13 attending," Panter said. Bargaining continued right to the 12 noon, Nov. 4 expiration date before agreement was reached. Workers approved the deal by a nearly two-to-one margin Nov. 6.

Tom Price

Hostesses pressure cruise company

The women regularly hand out "Travel Advisory" leaflets to cruise passengers, informing them about the firings and requesting they ask Royal Caribbean why the hostesses were terminated. The leaflet also requests that vacationers call the company to express their support to stop its illegal anti-union tactics.

In the meantime union attorneys filed four more ULPs Nov. 12 against the employer alleging the employer has restrained and coerced its employees by photographing them while engaged in protected union activities; is enforcing a discriminatory rule prohibiting the wearing of union buttons; told one of the fired hostesses she would "never work on this pier again" and reduced the work hours of two other hostesses because of their union activities.

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JUDGE OVERTURNS COMPANY UNION VICTORY IN WATSONVILLE

Rejecting a controversial position taken by California's Agricultural Labor Relations Board, an administrative law judge on Nov. 5 threw out a union representation election held at Watsonville's largest strawberry grower, Coastal Berry, earlier this year.

In that election the strawberry Coastal Berry Farm Workers Committee received a majority of votes.

In Oxnard, however, a four-hour drive south of Watsonville, 162 Coastal Berry Farm Workers Union members notified the election was being held, and therefore didn't participate in the voting. Their votes would have changed the election results, Judge Sobel ruled.

Coastal Berry, formerly Galtigulo Corp., has been a major target of the industry-wide effort, now in its third year, by the United Farm Workers to organize Watsonville's strawberry workers.

The company, which originally belonged to agrochemical giant Monsanto Corp., was bought in the spring of 1997 by two investors who pledged to rehire blacklisted UFW supporters and to cease the company's unpleasant tactics to stop the union drive.

But Coastal Berry forever continued to harass UFW supporters and campaign against the union. After this year's harvest began in May, former UFW workers organized a series of work stoppages at Coastal Berry to pressure the company into abandoning its neutral stance and instead fight the union. Every day, several workers went on the stoppages, a crew of UFW supporters would arrive to help organize a field was assaulted.

Following the incident a Coastal Berry attorney asked the UFW for a binding arbitration in the company union activities, with the assistance of an NLRB agent, to resolve the election petition on behalf of a previously-unknown organization, the Coastal Berry Farm Workers Committee. Workers subsequently testified. The Coastal Berry Farm Workers Committee invoked its right to a new election.

The company, which brought in 800 new workers and fired 200 of the union's supporters, was eventually incorporated as a company union, and that it was not possible to hold an election that could be considered meaningful in the absence of intimidation that plagued the company. Nevertheless, the ALRB went on to sanction the company.

Both Sobel and the employer appealed the election results and Judge Sobel overturned them on the most narrow and technical grounds possible—the exclusion of the workers in Oxnard. By doing so, he avoided bringing into question the legitimacy of the Coastal Berry Farm Workers Committee, or on responsibility for the company's violence, directed at UFW supporters.

In a statement, the Coastal Berry Farm Workers Committee said Judge Sobel's ruling will be appealed. Meanwhile, the UFW plans to challenge the ALRB over the violence and intimidation at Coastal Berry, as well as a suit against the company's right to organize the employees of the company.

This year's strawberry season ended with a whimpering. The harvest will not resume in Watsonville until April or May. During the winter, the UFW is organizing an effort to visit those workers at home who will return to the strawberry fields in the next year, in preparation for another year of campaigning.

—David Bacon

ANG SIGNS CONTRACT, SHAFTS WORKERS AGAIN

After nearly twelve years of bargaining and six years of a community boycott, the Alameda Newspaper Guild finally signed a contract with the company that will set the stage for another round of the labor dispute.

The three-year contract sets a wage increase of between $100 and $200 a week for all guild members, a guaranteed 40 hour week for all members, a merit pay plan that the union reluctantly agreed to that was not pushed by the company, an industry-wide effort, now in its third year, by the United Farm Workers to organize Watsonville's strawberry workers.

...
BOSS VS. WORKERS: ORGANIZE A LOCAL OF YOUR OWN

When workers at Powell's Books in Portland started organizing themselves, they did some union shopping. After studying three other locals, the workers turned to the ILWU. They were impressed with the autonomy they would have as founding members of Local 5, the first Columbia River Area non-longshore local in 50 years. The union's fighting tradition and conversations with ILWU warehouse workers helped the workers make up their mind. Recent expansions cost $3.5 million, according to Publishers Weekly. Kanter's business is typically 50% of its sales, estimated the company would have 2 million books for sale in the near future.

"There were a lot of changes at Powell's. It wasn't a lot of fun," said Mary Winzig, a purchaser for the leisure section with four years experience. Like most workers there, she also sells, inventories and sells books. She described a feeling of powerlessness among management, changes toward more aggressive profit making.

"In the management side, it became more us vs. them. The last straw was an e-mail in mid-September from the number two manager saying we would only get from raise," she said. With starting pay just above minimum wage and experienced workers making only people who care. But the speed up and increasing caseload, coupled with low pay, has been making it more and more difficult for them to do their job.

"I've learned so much about myself and my co-workers, it's really changed my life," Winzig said. She had been thinking of quitting. "Now there's hope. We're going to meet and taking charge, standing up for ourselves." - Tom Price

POCHEL AUTO PARTS WORKERS DEMAND RECOGNITION

When Pochel Auto Parts Distributors in Tacoma, Wash. fired two employees involved in organizing their warehouse with Local 23 on Nov. 3, allegedly due to "lack of work," workers were supposed to be intimidated. The fact that Pochel had hired a new person a week before and another a week after might have sent them the message: "Organize and we'll fire you." Instead workers responded with more organizing.

"It's been a really exciting time. I've learned so much about myself and my co-workers, it's really changed my life," Winzig said. She had been thinking of quitting. "Now there's hope. We're going to meet and taking charge, standing up for ourselves." - Tom Price

Drug counselors talk union

Drug counselors at the San Francisco office of Addiction Research and Treatment, Inc., Local 6 activists and supporters from HERE Local 2 rallied in front of ART's headquarters Nov. 19 in a lively protest of the company's refusal to recognize and bargain with the ILWU.

The counselors see addicts who desperately need help and are often the only ones who care. But the speed up and increasing caseload, coupled with low pay, has been making it more and more difficult for them to do their work effectively. So the counselors called Local 6 West Bay Business Agent Fred Pecker Sept. 15 to ask for help. So many large number of them had signed up with the union. By Oct. 22 an overwhelming majority of workers had signed cards asking Local 6 to represent them, but management refused a card check recognition. Instead they fired Cory McKinnon, one of the counselors involved in the union drive, although they admitted the other counselors' work, intensified the speed up and called more captive audience meetings.

ATWU attorneys filed Unfair Labor Practice charges with the NLRB Nov. 6 charging ART with the unlawful firing of McKinnon, as well as coercive inter- rogation, surveillance, threatening bonus losses and implementing new work rules to keep workers from talking up.

At the rally Superannuitants Supervisors Tom Ammanoo and Sue Bieman joined in, and Bieman met with management later to discuss the situation. Local 6 President Larry DeGaetano and BA Fred Pecker joined with HERE Local 2 President Mike Casey and McKinnon in asking for a meeting after the rally with Kletter. He refused and locked the doors.

"We'd like to come up and talk about a contract."

"We're just going to be pretty good about calling workers in one at a time when you have two managers to talk them" - Tom Price

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Northern California Organizer
Mike Diller 310-835-2770
Southern California Organizer
Peter Olesy 415-773-0535
ILWU puts on LEADership Institute

By Gene Vrana
Associate Director of Education and Librarian

The ILWU International held its first leadership-training program in Palm Springs, Calif. Nov. 18-22, 1998. Thirty nine rank and file members and 17 instructors assembled at the Riverside Resort—a site selected because it is union-owned and -operated—for five days of intense workshops, panels and small group sessions devoted to developing leadership skills and understanding the unique traditions and history of the ILWU.

Formally dubbed the ILWU Leadership Education and Development Institute (LEAD), the program was funded by the 1997 ILWU-IBU Legislative Director's Fund, and applications were mailed to every mainland ILWU local and IBU region, and printed in The Dispatcher. All applications from rank and file members were reviewed and accepted, and participants represented the diverse areas and occupations of the union's jurisdiction in Alaska, Washington, Oregon and California. Available space was made possible including participation from Hawaii Local 142.

"What was great—and really surprised me—was that the whole program was free from internal union politics," said one member from Southern California. "It was about becoming better union members and building the union."

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Joe Ibarra, International President Brian McWilliams, and International Vice President, Hawaii Leonard Hoshijo directed the development of LEAD's curriculum. They drew heavily on the extensive experience of Local 142's ongoing leadership education program. In fact, LEAD instructors included Local 142 Secretary-Treasurer Guy Fujimura and retired social worker Ah Quon McElrath. Local 142 Communications Director Mel Chang helped facilitate small group discussions, and Local 142 Vice President Bobby Giral had taught LEAD as a rank-and-file member.

Day one began with introductions by Doug Sigurdson, President of Canada's Local 514 and longtime coordinator of the Canadian Area's leadership education program. Ah Quon McElrath and Bill Ward, retired Coast Committeeman, then gave an overview of the principles and ethics of ILWU leadership over the decades.

"Their knowledge is irreplaceable," said one participant. "Ah Quon is downright inspiring."

Joel Schaffer and Jan Sunoo of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service led off day two devoted to "Making Democracy Work," with a dynamic presentation and series of small group exercises. Using humor and spontaneity, Schaffer and Sunoo helped LEAD participants gain new insights into styles of leadership and how to recognize and overcome obstacles. All effective communication involves the ability to "think, speak and listen," they said, and a "commandeer" or "charismatic" leadership style is not the answer. "The bullshit was really flying," one participant said. "I really liked the complete participation of all the members," said another. And a third reported, "The whole day dealt with a very difficult subject. I don't think it could have been done any better."

Day four offered an opportunity to apply many of the insights gained earlier when the participants underwent a twelve-hour immersion in training and education about organizing, networking and the ILWU's organizing program in particular. The day's experiences ranged from Bill Fletcher's discussion of the myths and inequities of the economic system in which ILWU families and their communities live and work, to understanding an employer's anti-union "captive market." Fletcher outlined the many economic pressures on local and national unions as they try to develop and fund budgets in an anti-labor, anti-union economy.

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Reflections on the Labor Party Convention

By David Freiboth

Inlandboatman’s Union National President

The Labor Party held its first Constitutional Convention Nov. 11-13, 1998 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A total of 1,414 delegates attended from international unions, affiliated locals, endorsing unions and local chapters attended. I was asked to attend the Labor Party Convention by the Titled Officers of the Inlandboatman’s Union National (IU). Shannon Donato (GCUS), Dave Freiboth (IBU National President) and Robert Iminger (IBU, San Francisco Region).

The hot topic on the agenda for this convention was the election strategy, that is, the running of candidates for office. After spirited debate concerning the level of control the national party would have over chapters and affiliates, the Convention adopted modifications to the Labor Party Constitution allowing for the nomination of candidates. In the end, final say will rest with the National Council. A majority of the delegates agreed with the national leadership that potential destabilization of party funding and the need to make sure electoral strategy is transparent and accountable and have sufficient resources to succeed necessitated top-down control.

The Convention also adopted a resolution laying out a national campaign theme of calling for Just Health Care, a single-payer system that guarantees Americans universal access to quality care. Another resolution the Convention adopted aimed at privatizing Social Security from privatization and for eliminating the payroll tax earnings cap, now at $60,000 per year, on Social Security.

The Convention also adopted a resolution setting out a fair trade campaign, rejecting NAFTA, WTO, MAI and all such “free trade agreements” that the delegates also added an amendment to the founding convention, that is, the Convention would not unimpeded access to a full range of family planning and reproductive services for men and women, including the right to continue or terminate a pregnancy. We oppose any forms of coerced sterilization.

By the closing gavel Sunday afternoon a more focused and progressive Labor Party emerged from the David L. Laurance Convention Center.

Speeches by humorist Michael Moore and consumer advocate Ralph Nader were the highlights of the event. Their message was simple: stop acting like a third party and start acting like a real alternative. Moore’s presentation concluded with a video (what else) from his new show on cable and a full episode of a proposed sit com. The sit com is a pro labor bit about auto workers thrown out of work when the factory moves to Mexico. The network gave it a light green, but the advertisers (GM among others) said no go. So big capital will squelch this entertaining attempt to bring the real issues of working people to the small screen.

Moore’s and Nader’s messages were loud and clear: the Labor Party is easy to identify with: basic health care for all, a commitment to work within the system for active reform. Their message was simple: stop acting like a third party and start acting like a real alternative. The Labor Party is neither a union organizing drive, from the ground up. That’s why if there is going to be an alternative that really has a chance, it is this. But does it have a chance? Only time will tell. There’s no question that the system is stacked against a breakthrough by the Labor Party. In the meantime leadership in the labor movement is in a quandary. To a person, almost every labor activist supports the concept of a Labor Party. But asking someone in leadership to give up a lifetime of work for Democratic friends is asking a lot. Make no mistake about it. There are some true labor friends in the Democratic Party people who should not feel we are turning our backs on them.

So where do we go? At the last International Convention the delegates did not endorse the Labor Party. If there are elements in the rank and file that don’t want to abandon this noble cause, then it’s time to get active.

I, for one, would not recommend that we send another small delegation to the next Labor Party convention. A sublime presence is not the ILWU way. We should either go there in force or not go at all.

Longshore Pensioners,

Recent Pensioners: Local 4—Lawrence Hougland; Local 10—Frank Gauthier; Wilfred La Fleur; Isaac Terry Jr.; Local 13—Phillip Cruz, Jesus Navarro; Local 23—Kenneth Rohar; Local 40—Kenneth Nelson

Deceased: Local 8—Hallie Berrington; Local 10—Lawrence Migliaccio (Betty), Emil Bouloud (Genevieve), Willie Jones (Bobbie), Paul Rico (Elvia), Theo Davidson (Marlene), Hayes Celeston (James Mayfield); Local 12—James Johnson (Bobbie), Local 13—Leo Cotton (Elise), Jerry Willsly (Linda), Pedro Fernandez (Nieves), Fred Hipsher (Robert); Local 14—Bobbe La Flew, Roberta, Joe Torres (Sharon), Ysidoro Del Rio, Ray Singer, William Price; Local 21—Dale Grogan

Building an alternative on the back of a strong personality such as Ross Perot or Jesse Jackson, the Labor Party faithful are building this party as though it were a union organizing drive, from the ground up.

That’s why if there is going to be an alternative that really has a chance, this is it. But does it have a chance? Only time will tell. There’s no question that the system is stacked against a breakthrough by the Labor Party. In the meantime leadership in the labor movement is in a quandary. To a person, almost every labor activist supports the concept of a Labor Party. But asking someone in leadership to give up a lifetime of work for Democratic friends is asking a lot. Make no mistake about it. There are some true labor friends in the Democratic Party people who should not feel we are turning our backs on them.

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Survivors and Widows

(Barbara), Robert Ryland; Local 29—William Gardanna; Local 50—Wilho Sarangara; Local 63—Louis Miller Jr. (Bertha), Bill Stewart (Wanda); Local 94—Lanier Sidney; Local 98—Clarence Rood. (Survivors in parenthesis.)

Deceased Survivors: Local 10—Theresa Eckel, Leona Sloniker, Ethel Young, Alivia Morgado, Willie Brooks, Susan Barker; Local 12—Emma Germond, Margaret Champagne, Frances Cavanagh; Local 13—Florence Kestenbolz, Edith Hull, Beatrice Whitley, Julia Holder; Local 24—Ona Tomestic; Local 52—Muriel Kolloen, Catherine Berg; Local 63—Reina Burns.
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