New Officers take union's helm

International Secretary-Treasurer William E. Adams, International Vice President, Hawaii Wesley Furtado, International President Robert McEllrath, International Vice President, Mainland Joseph R. Radisich, Northwest Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet and California Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz Jr.

ILWU attends ITF Congress in South Africa

Former Local 6 Pres. Keith Eickman, 1913-2006

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Schwarzenegger's Medicine Show

"You know he always holds it in a tent, And if you're looking for the real thing, He can show you where it went."

-a. rodriguez

As the November election approaches, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is using his best to appear liberal, embracing Democratic issues and Democratic leaders, seeking mainstream consensus and conspicuously avoiding George Bush. He's lowered the mean, vindictive anti-union crusader who got his political clock cleaned in special elections last year. But while he's trying to shed his snake skin, he's selling snake oil.

He's not really a liberal—he's just playing one on TV. His charade is as movie box office as any role he's played—all make believe. He's been forced by the political reality of California to change his act. Now he's signing bills to raise the minimum wage, to provide preschool programs and minimize the cost of curbing greenhouse gases. With unexpected money in the state coffers he's increasing spending on education and settling contracts with unions he was previously at war with. He's out promoting the $37 billion infrastructure bond that would provide health care to all Californians and another that would have extended unemployment payments to locked-out workers. He is expected to veto another bill that would increase worker disability payments. He's planned his first major re-election campaign event next week, which he will announce on the opening day of the Legislature. What will Arnold do? We must continue to recognize that he needs to do so much. We need to keep educating our members and continue to work and give this union the tools that make change possible.

The highlight of my presidency and my career was the prolonged 2002 Longshore contract negotiations. I want to thank the entire Negotiating team, including the Safety Committee, for their professional work. They were steadfast throughout the battle, especially the lockout and the Taft-Hartley injunction, working together as brothers and guides. The Longshore Division is through difficult times. I am very proud to have chaired this team.

As this will be my last column as your President, I would like to share my thoughts on where I see the ILWU today and things we need to continue doing to further strengthen and build this union. Three and a half years ago we emerged victorious from the biggest attack the employers have made on the ILWU in more than 50 years. The challenge of that struggle has made us wiser and stronger. Since then I have made it a priority as president to reinforce and create committees to educate our ranks, not just on union principles but also on our future responsibilities in the world place and the world as we change.

I would like to commend all who have stepped up and served on committees. Your efforts have without a doubt moved us forward as we members can continue to enjoy the future benefits of this great union.

I want to emphasize how important it is to keep our committees in place and continue the work they have been doing. Elected union officials can only do so much. We need the energy and input of our rank-and-file members to take on the work of the union.

The battles are not over and our committees need to keep educating our members and continue to work and think progressively and stay ahead of the curve. Our future depends on us meeting change with change.

I have also recognized as a priority the need to better position ourselves in the international arena. We have strengthened our network with international unions and dockers around the world. Over the past six years we have hosted many conferences, allowing dockers and their unions the opportunity to build solidarity, share common problems and develop future strategies to meet globalization changes head on. The ILWU is without a doubt the strength and beacon of hope for struggling workers around the world. Continued networking and globalizing of unions is one of the keys to future success and stability.

We can only be as strong as you, the rank and file. We must continue to recognize that we need to protect and preserve what we believe in. Our past gives us great history. The struggles will continue. Solidarity and education are critical for future success to be had. We must do a better job of meeting our obligation to this great union. Going to union meetings is an essential part, so we all understand future needs the union encounters. We live in a world of change, and understanding it creates the atmosphere and solidarit
New Officers sworn in, take charge

The ILWU International Executive Board met in the union’s headquarters in San Francisco Sept. 7 and 8 to certify the results of the International election and to swear in the new officers.

Outgoing International President Jim Spinosa presided over the beginning of the meeting as the Balloting Committee chair Jack Wyatt, Sr., Secretary-Treasurer of warehouse Local 17 reported on the vote counting held Aug. 14. He noted that the ballots were scanned and all candidates and observers present were afforded the opportunity to watch and ask questions and did so without disruptions.

The Elections Procedures Committee chair; Martin Jensen, an IEB member from Local 142, reported that the committee had received no timely challenges to the election, so the IEB recommended the board certify the election. Jensen also reported that the Financial Disclosure Committee found no problems in the candidates’ campaign finances that would have affected the outcome.

With that the board voted unanimously to certify the election results and Spinosa administered the oath of office to all the newly elected officers. They are:

**International President:** Robert McEllrath

**International Vice President, Hawaii:** Wesley Furtado

**International Vice President, California Coast Committeeman:** Ray Ortiz Jr.

**International Secretary-Treasurer:** William E. Adams

**Secretary of warehouse Local 142, IEPC:** Steve Fyten

**Secretary of the ILWU Canada:** Martin Jenson

**Local 142, IEPC:** Eli Miura

**Local 10, BC:** Martin (pineapple), Kenneth Ige (General Trades)

**Mainland:** Joseph R. Radusch

**Mainland:** Michael Davenport

**Puget Sound IEB representatives:** Fred Pecker, Lawrence Thibeaux, Richard Cavalli

**Columbia River IEB representatives:** Jerry Ylonen, George O’Neil

**Desert Southern California:** Michael Davenport

**Northern California IEB representatives:** Fred Pecker, Lawrence Thibeaux, Richard Cavalli

**Southern California IEB representatives:** Mike Mitre, John Tousseau, Luisa Gratz

**Hawaii Local 142 representatives:** President Fred Galdones, Nate Lum (longshore), Joey Silva (tourism), Robert Zahn (sugar), Avelino Leal Sundet

**Northwest Coast Committee:** Leal Sundet

**Southwest Coast Committee:** Michael Davenport

**Northern California IEB representatives:** Fred Pecker, Lawrence Thibeaux, Richard Cavalli

**Columbia River IEB representatives:** Jerry Ylonen, George O’Neil

**Puget Sound IEB representatives:** Max Vekich, Conrad Spell

**Hawaii Local 142 representatives:** President Fred Galdones, Nate Lum (longshore), Joey Silva (tourism), Robert Zahn (sugar), Avelino Leal Sundet

**New Board of Trustees from among members sworn in, newly installed International President McEllrath oversaw the board’s selection of the new Board of Trustees from among its members. They will be Alan Cote, Nate Lum, George O’Neil and Max Vekich.

The board then passed a Statement of Policy in Support of the Sobeys Workers, members of the Retail, Wholesale Distribution and Service Union (RWDSU), an affiliate of ILWU Canada in the province of Saskatchewan, who have been on strike for a year. (see below).

The board then voted to accept the American Radio Association (ARA), the more than 100 ship radio operators, as an autonomous affiliate of the ILWU. The affiliation will be similar to that of the IBU, except that for purposes of IEB representation, the ARA will be considered a part of the Northern California area.

The IEB will next meet Dec. 7-8.

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**Statement of policy in support of the Sobeys workers**

The workers at Sobeys on Albert Street in Regina, members of RWDSU Local 454 and an affiliate of ILWU Canada, walked off the job Sept. 11, 2005. Their Collective Agreement expired in Jan. 1, 2005, more than 21 months ago and their Employer continues to fail to offer a fair settlement on wages and benefits.

Sobeys refuses to provide competitive rates of pay to its workers and in fact is paying its non-unionized stores’ workers better than its union workers. Sobeys has been found to be in violation of Canadian labor laws on a number of occasions and, unlike most other Canadian employers, refuses to provide wage increases from the date the agreement expired.

Sobeys is the second largest retail food company in Canada with a major presence in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. Sobeys net earnings for their first quarter ending Aug. 6, 2005 were $48.2 million. This company can afford to compensate its workers fairly.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour has endorsed a boycott of all Sobeys stores in Saskatchewan and Regina to support the workers on strike and to encourage Sobeys to negotiate a fair settlement with its workers.

The ILWU Executive Board supports the workers on strike at Sobeys and will alert all its locals to do every-thing in their power to support the Sobeys workers. The ILWU International Executive Board salutes the workers of Sobeys on the first anniversary of their strike and sends its solidarity greetings to RWDSU Local 454.
Wherever they go, there we are

by Marcy Rein

Early on the organizing committee at Blue Diamond Growers (BDG) learned that they would have to think outside the gate of their Almond Growers anti-tank plant to win their drive to join ILWU warehouse Local 17. This summer their campaign has taken them to places they never thought they’d see, like Seoul and Tokyo—and to small towns all over central California, like Modesto, Atwater, Chico, and Colusa.

“All Almond Growers try to paint the campaign into a little space around 1900, surround Blue Diamond,” said organizing committee member Mike Oliviera. “I tell people it’s on a world scale. Blue Diamond is done; we will be there as well.”

BDG has a global reach, shipping 70 percent of its almonds overseas. Japan ranks third among BDG’s top 10 customers. South Korea ranks sixth.

Blue Diamond also has deep roots in their community and the cooperative and its almond-farmer members and decision-makers live and work in towns scattered around Hwy 99, from Bakersfield in the south to Chico in the north. And BDG is anti-union. It met the workers’ drive with a nasty union-busting campaign. The National Labor Relations Board found it guilty of more than 20 labor law violations, including the firings of two union supporters. Though the company re-hired the two, it insists it did nothing wrong.

The workers have turned their eyes to Blue Diamond’s networks of customers, distributors, shippers and decision-makers, and pressing for a formal neutrality agreement between the company and the union.

SEUL BROTHERS

Organizing Committee member Gene Esparza couldn’t believe his ears when a KCTU organizer, Agustin Ramirez, told him he would be going to Seoul, South Korea in July.

“Without hesitation I told him ‘yes, three times’,” said Esparza, a forklift driver with 36 years at the Blue Diamond Growers’ warehouse Local 17 in Sacramento.

The ILWU warehouse Local 17 has coordinated two international days of action in support of the BDG workers, the second during its convention in Vancouver in May. Several global and national unions and federations have helped carry their message to Blue Diamond workers and customers and distributors overseas.

Most recently, South Korea’s two main federations—the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU)—have stepped forward, along with the Zenkowan, the KCTU, the Korean Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU) and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) have been powerful allies—and alert their neighbors and associates to the cause.

“We’re just hoping the message gets back to Youngdahl,” said Hurlbut. “We’re just going to keep on, to keep on, at a time, until they hear us.”

Blue Diamond CEO Youngdahl also serves as vice-chair of the California Almond Board, a grower’s association that promotes almonds as well as grower-friendly public policy. The agreement among growers began their tour by showing up at the Almond Board’s July 15 meeting in Sacramento.

Blue Diamond Director Robert Weinberg sits on the board of directors—and alert their neighbors and associates to the cause.

“We’d like to see a truly one-worlder campaign that would include a provision in the KORUS-FTA to recognize and support the right to organize,” Weinberg said.

“Blue Diamond workers: Jose Villegas (second from left in front), Alex Galvan to his right and Chuy Guzman behind Galvan.

“We want to share our experience,” Guzman said. “We want people to know this is positive.”

The contract the Oxbow workers signed July 13 as members of ILWU Locals 13 and 178 means a $1 per hour wage increase over two years and a fully paid Kaiser health plan. They have two new holidays and four personal days plus two weeks’ vacation.

But the biggest thing you can’t put a price on,” Galvan said. “It’s recognition and the right to manage the work process. The workers made their gains by acting like a union at the table and on the job. They buttoned up and stickered up and walked off the job for three informational pickets. When Galvan got called into the office, eight guys followed behind him. When Oxbow tried to fire one of the guys, they got his job back. And when Oxbow stalled and crawled in negotiations, they took a strike vote. It came down 31 to zero. Ten days later they had a tentative agreement.

KORS-FTA would undermine workers’ rights in their own country. Already, many of Korea’s 15 million workers must work long hours in unsafe conditions. More than half are irregular, meaning they work part-time or are self-employed.

Representatives from the KCTU and FKTU came to Washington, D.C., to protest and lobby when talks on the KORS-FTA opened in June. After a few weeks of days with the AFL-CIO as well as the ILWU there, they invited the U.S. unions to join them at the next round of talks in Seoul July 10-14.

Esparza and Ramirez traveled with a Korean delegation from the AFL-CIO. During their five days in Seoul, they met with a Blue Diamond distributor in Seoul and with the union that represents workers at Lotte confectionery, a big BDG customer. They spoke at a press conference organized for them by the KFTU and KCTU, and told people at several rallies and cultural events why Blue Diamond workers need a union. They also added their voice to the loud, dramatic and determined anti-KORS protests that rocked Seoul that week.

Around 170,000 workers all over South Korea answered KCTU’s call for a general strike July 12, the day of the biggest march and rally. The unions joined forces with farmers’ and civic groups in the Korean Alliance Against KORUS-FTA, a coalition of 293 organizations. The rally in Seoul drew 40,000 people despite a drop-in downpour. The ILWU-AFL-CIO delegation headed up the march with the Korean movement leaders, walking behind a sound truck bristling with nine amplifiers. Three people took turns on the microphone, keeping up a ceaseless stream of chants. The crowd yelled back, not flustered when we walked in with our yellow shirts even though he acts like a fool. Committee member Ann Hurlbut said. “He got this real stiff, cold look on his face and tightened his mouth.”

The workers couldn’t get time on the agenda, but they did have a chance to meet with a reporter from the Modesto Bee and hand flyers to many of the growers in the audience. Then the ILWU met with air-conditioned oases to hang out in before heading up to Atwater for the ILWU warehouse Local 17 meeting at the Merced Union High School District.

Blue Diamond Director Robert Weinberg sits on the board of directors—and alert their neighbors and associates to the cause.

“We’d like to see a truly one-worlder campaign that would include a provision in the KORUS-FTA to recognize and support the right to organize,” Weinberg said.

“The Japanese take workers’ rights very seriously,” Reyes said. “We thought the voters should be concerned. Just about everyone they met everyone asked if they had ever seen a labor union. It seemed to us that the people had heard of us.”

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By Steve Stallone

September 2006

McEllrath takes leadership role

ILWU solidifies international solidarity at ITF Congress

By Steve Stallone

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September 2006

Focusing an era of ever increasing capitalist globalization, with trans-national corporations that own and control the economy consolidating their power and using it to lower the living standards of those who work for them, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) held its 41st Congress in Durban, South Africa Aug. 2-9.

At the gathering, the ITF, a world-wide organization of 634 dockers, seafarers, truck and rail and aviation unions from 142 countries, scoped out a strategy to respond to and protect its members. The ITUW, which is affiliated with the ITF, sent a delegations of four to the meeting—International President Bob McEllrath, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, ILWU Canadian President Tom Dufresne and ILWU Director of International Affairs Ray Familathe.

Strong transport unions are central to exerting social control over the global economy, but to do that we can no longer rely on the traditional way of organizing," the ITF's General Secretary David Cockroft told the assembled delegates at the opening of the meeting. "We have to get unions to focus on appealing to new groups of people who are joining the workforce.

The Congress theme, "Organizing Globally, Fights for our Rights," was reflected in the programs its participants agreed to implement. In the Ports of Convenience Section, delegates worked to define the "Ports of Convenience" campaign targeting ports and terminals with sub-standard conditions for dockworkers. This is occurring mostly in places where ports are being privatized and casual workers. The campaign will coordinate solidarity actions aimed at employers trying to break up union contracts.

The Congress delegates unanimously agreed to set up an AP Moeller-Maersk worldwide network of union activists and officials to organize employees at the company and its subsidiaries and contractors. The first meeting of the AP Moeller-Maersk network will be organized next spring in Copenhagen, the location of Maersk's headquarters.

During the meeting, delegates watched a Dutch-made film on the campaign by European dockers to defeat the recent attempts by the European Union to pass the Directive on Self Handling which would have allowed seafarers to perform longshore work by loading and discharging cargo from ships. Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia and newly elected chair of the Dockers' Section, reminded delegates how such international solidarity actions aided his union in 1998 when the stevedoring company Patrick conspired with the Australian government to eliminate the jobs of 1,400 dockers and replace them with non-union workers.

The delegates at the Dockers' Section also discussed the current situation with dockers in Mexico and Latin America as terminal operators move to use Pacific Coast ports there as alternatives to U.S. West Coast ports operated by the ILWU.

"Since the early 1990s when ILWU delegations visited Mexican longshore workers in Manzanillo and Lasaro Cardenas we have a good rapport with them," ILWU Director of International Affairs Ray Familathe said. "We are looking to reconnect with them and schedule meetings and further discussions to strengthen relations and mutual solidarity.

The Seafarers' Section focused on a new international Maritime Labor Convention, also known as the "Seafarers' Bill of Rights," bringing together and updating more than 60 maritime labor standards set by the International Labor Organization (ILO). It would set minimum requirements for seafarers' conditions of employment, including accommoda-

tions, recreational facilities, food, health, medical care and social security protection. Ships covered by the convention would be required to have certificates proving they meet these key standards.

At the Congress the ILO's Director of Labor Standards Dombua-Henry told the delegates that at least 30 countries representing 33 percent of world shipping gross tonnage had to ratify the convention before it could come into force. She announced that the ILO would pursue a five-year action plan to promote the rapid ratification of the convention.

The Congress also elected new officers to run the federation for the next four years. Randall Howard, General Secretary of the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) was elected president of the ITF, becoming the first African and youngest leader of the organization in its 110 year history.

"I am looking forward to seeing the ITF expanding with new memberships following this process of unity, and also because of our renewed commitments to recruitment and organizing, particularly of women and young workers," Howard said in his acceptance speech after being elected president. "There are key priorities in terms of making sure unions can operate democratically to defend workers. We have to take a strong position against those who are attacking quality employment, and basic rights—for example, in Iran, Pakistan and Australia."

"As a leader, Randall Howard is a man of action, resourceful and full of creative energy," ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willis Adams said. "He will be a beacon of light for the ITF. His speech was passionate and it struck a chord with the delegates."

Howard's union, SATAWU, was the Congress' host union. It was formed in 2000 as a merger between the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and the South African Railways and Harbors Union (SARHWU). Both unions received ITF-coordinated assistance during the days of apartheid and with their recently combined strength were able to halt attempts to privatize the coun-

try's railways. SAWATU is a member of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), one of four trade union centers in the country. Of the 2.9 million trade union members in South Africa 1.8 million belong to COSATU affiliates, which is 58.2 percent of the trade union movement in South Africa.

Paddy Crumlin was elected chair of the Dockers' Section and Lars Lundgren of the Swedish Transport Workers Union took over the 1st Vice Chair position while ILA International President John Bowers became 2nd Vice Chair. ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, who nominated both Crumlin and Bowers for their positions, will serve on the Steering Committee of the Dockers' Section and on the Joint Seafarer-Docker Committee, as well as chair the North American Dockers Committee.

Recognizing AIDS is the most globalized epidemic in history and how the crisis is the profound impact on transportation workers, the ITF Congress voted to prepare a world-wide campaign against HIV/AIDS to be launched on World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, 2006. Holding its Congress for the first time in Africa, where 30 percent of the population is HIV positive and projections are for that to double in the next five to ten years, gave the matter further urgency. So the Congress committed its affiliated unions to a campaign of programs and activities designed to combat the spread of the virus, and to provide care and support to those infected and their families.

In other matters the Congress also condemned the continuing violence in the Middle East and called for a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine as the only way to peace. The Congress passed another emergency resolution against the Iranian government's abuse of workers' rights. It also condemned the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, London and Madrid, called for no outside intervention in the internal affairs of Venezuela and Cuba, for the ITF and its affiliates to prioritize the participation of women in their organizations and for moves to strengthen trade union rights in Pakistan.

ILWU and ILA delegations at the ITF Congress. [left to right] ILWU Director of International Affairs Ray Familathe, ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, ILA General Organizer Jerry Owens, ILA's John Baker and ILA Legislative Representative Ingo Esders.

Newly elected ITF President Randall Howard emphasized the need to organize women and young people.
### INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS

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**Southern California elects three.**

**Northern California elects three.**

**Columbia River elects two.**

**Puget Sound elects two.**

**Alaska elects one.**

**Canada elects one.**

**IBU elects one.**

**Hawaii elects one each from sugar, tourism, pineapple, longshore and general trades.**
Introduction by Harvey Schwartz

This is the first of a three-part series featuring the recollections of ILWU leaders who made important contributions to the building of the union in Hawaii. In 2004 The Dispatcher carried oral history articles on former officers Louis Goldblatt (International Secretary-Treasurer, 1943-1977) and Jack Hall (Hawaii Regional Director, 1944-1969), who are generally considered the main figures in the organization of the Islands. This month’s oral history spotlights Frank Thompson, the Sacramento warehouse Local 17 charter member and founder who was also the chief field organizer in Hawaii during the 1944-1946 unionization drive there.

Goldblatt was instrumental in selecting both Hall and Thompson to organize the Islands. “We decided we needed a guy in the field like Frank Thompson who was as good an organizer as this country has ever seen,” he told Edward D. Beechert of the University of Hawaii in a 1979 interview.

“He was quite a character, an old-time Wobbly (member of the militant Industrial Workers of the World, or IWW), a hardy, efficient guy with an endless amount of energy. Frank worked well with Jack, although they didn’t see too much of each other because Frank spent so much time in the field.”

Thompson, who was born in 1906, worked tirelessly during his brief career in Hawaii. During those two more years than 20,000 new workers were organized into the ILWU. Most of the workers Thompson talks explicitly about here were from Filipino sugar plantation camps. But he also organized Japanese, Chinese, native Hawaiian, Portuguese and other workers and some pineapple facilities.

Thompson’s ways 1944-1946 was a unique moment in time, as Thompson’s oral history reveals, when things came together just right for the union. Still, Thompson was the man who went out into the field and made it happen. As then International President Jimmy Herman said when Thompson died in 1979, “Frank Thompson was one of those incredibly devoted and selfless people that made the very existence of this union possible.”

After his return from the Islands in 1946, Thompson was elected secretary-treasurer of Local 17. He held that post until his retirement in 1970. During 1967 he sat for a tape session in Sacramento, Calif. with Professor Beechert, the author of the indispensable “Working in Hawaii: A Labor History.” That interview was conducted as part of the Pacific Regional Oral History Project at the University of Hawaii, which Beechert financed and directed. We are greatly indebted to Beechert for allowing us to use the transcript of that tape as the basis for this article.

FRANK THOMPSON

Edited by Harvey Schwartz
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

I n 1934 I started putting together what later became ILWU warehouse Local 17 here in Sacramento. Going back into the '20s, I organized for the IWW in the logging camps. I worked in them camps a good many years. After 1929, during the Depression, I supported the unemployed councils and the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU). We'd go see Lincoln Steffens, the famous muckraker, when he was still alive in the early 1930s. He was living down at Carmel with his wife, Ella Winters, who was a progressive writer herself. We'd put the bum on them for money when we wanted to put out a leaflet or feed somebody.

Around the beginning of 1935 I was approached by the guys in the Pacific Coast District of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA). This was two years before the West Coast ILA became the ILWU. The ILA had a bargemen’s local on the waterfront in Sacramento. They were out on strike and needed help from somebody who’d had a little experience. I stayed with them until the strike was won.

After the bargemen’s strike, we put on a big drive to finish up organizing warehouses here. We actually started in '34, but our organizing drive stalled in the early spring of '35. Warren Denton from the San Francisco ILA warehouse board had been up here working with us, but he had to drop it. I had to pick the thing up after he left. This was later that spring.

In November of '35 we got our first contract. It was at the old Pioneer Mill and the warehouse here. Then we organized the wholesale groceries and the rice mills. We’ve been in business ever since. I worked with Local 17 until ‘44 when the ILWU International asked me to go to Hawaii.

They had sent Mat Meehan down there, the longshoreman out of Portland. He was there a couple or three months and indicated he had to stay. Lou Goldblatt, the ILWU International secretary-treasurer, was looking for somebody else that could go down there and do ‘em a job. He asked me if I’d go. I said, ‘Some things are in pretty good shape in this local. I’ll go down and take a whack at it.’ That’s how I went to Hawaii.

I went down there as regional director, but after looking the thing over a week or two I decided they didn’t need a regional director. That is, they didn’t need me, anyway. I decided I’d rather go down and help out the guys in the other regions—outside the islands and let Jack Hall stay in Honolulu and take care of being regional director.

The first island I went to was Hawaii. I first went to Olaa, on the Island of Hawaii, and then over to Oahu. This was back to Honolulu. The next visit I made was over to Kauai. All our organization there had been smashed since Pearl Harbor was bombed and military rule came in. We had to pick up the pieces from there.

We started the drive in Lihue, Kauai, particularly the big plantations. The rest of ‘em fell into line as we went along. One time the manager of the Lihue Plantation invited me to take a trip. He had a dandy yacht and he went fishing way out for swordfish. I refused to go. You get on the guy’s boat, maybe he dumps you overboard. That’d be one good way to get rid of Thompson.

The union was definitely attractive to the workers. In many cases, from the time a guy was born until he died, his whole life was run by the plantations. In other words, life was a kind of serfdom, a peonage. On the Big Island at a lot of places if some worker had a friend in another plantation and he wanted the guy to come see him, he had to get permission from his manager. And the other guy had to get permission from his manager to go over to see the first guy. The workers were used to this, but a lot of ‘em resented it. So anything they could do to improve their wages and things of that kind, why, they were for it.

One thing that helped us organize is that during the war the workers were frozen to their jobs in all the outside islands. They couldn’t go to Honolulu even to work in defense unless they got a permit, and they couldn’t get a permit because the manpower committees wouldn’t allow ‘em to. The authorities had to keep men on the islands to run that sugar ‘cause sugar was considered war essential. So we weren’t organizing people one day and then having to reorganize a place over again the next day. The workers were all stuck there.

Another element that helped was the background of the union sailors coming ashore in Hawaii at the various ports and talking to the sugar workers and other people about the ‘34 strike. The maritime workers were probably among the world’s best organizers back then because of the nature of their travels and the people they came in contact with. They could carry a message quicker than a newspaper.

Beyond this, the missionaries and planters had given the Hawaiian workers a pretty good primary school education. Consequently, they weren’t illiterate. They could read what was going on. So they...
finally got the idea that going ILWU was one way to solve some of their problems. I knew this was a novel idea from the biological background there was, too. I could feel it all the time. Coupled with the union finding that when you organized a plantation the people stayed there, why, very few of 'em went any place from us. Of course, the conditions on some of the plantations were pretty tough, too. At Ewa on Oahu they had a good facade. Any visitor could show the front. But in the back they had open sewers. The toilets were in the houses. It was the off day and you would run down this wooden tube right through the camp. That was right around where people were walking. It's a wonder they didn't have typhoid or something. We raised hell about that and about housing, but during the Depression the conditions didn't do a hell of a lot about it. They couldn't get the materials or they didn't want to. But when the war was over we put the heat on the plantation owners to clean up some of these backwoods places. The Filipino workers in these different racial camps the planters had set up, but contact with other groups, with racial groups in California before I went to the Islands. In the Hamakua Valley you had Filipino and Mexican agricultural field workers. You had people who in many respects were similar to us but not in Hawaii. They had to deal with the plantation owners, the Filipinos that we helped these different groups in the CAWU all the way from 1929 on. I spent hours up in the mountains in Hawaii, particularly around Hilo. All along the Hamakua Coast you'd go in there around quitting time in the afternoon. The Filipino workers didn't want to be bothered right away. The first thing a guy did get was getting home. Then you would go back and help him. They would come along. A chunk of dough would go down, the roosters would hit the ground, and ringing it was over. Then you could sign 'em up. You learned that pretty early. The Filipinos, they spoke either Ilocano or Visayan, but we really didn't have any trouble with language. Most of the guys understood what was going on. You could get along in English and those that didn't understand, who, one of the other guys with you would translate pretty easily.

After we organized several Big Island plantations there was a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hearing. The employers screamed that the workers were agricultural and were legally excluded from the NLRB, which could only certify non-agricultural bargaining units. The hearing was in Hilo in October 1944. In January 1945 a decision came from the NLRB in Washington, D.C. directing NLRB elections in almost a dozen plantation operations and ordering two units giving us everything to the end of the railroad tracks, or out to the fisheries. They even gave us the bargaining rights on the workers that worked a horse pulling a stone boat out to the end of the railroad tracks, or out to the fisheries. The union got going the year after '46 sugar strike. A lot of the workers didn't pay any attention to it. They didn't have much faith in the union. The workers in Hawaii remained pretty true to the people who had organized them. With the drive for union organization, I think the moment had arrived in Hawaii when things that had been brewing over time came to a head. The workers were tired of living in a sort of island reformatory school. That's what I would call living on a Hawaiian plantation before the union, where people were treated like kids who can't leave or go over the wall. Since the ILWU broke that, most of the workers remained loyal to it despite the red-baiting.

After that, and after the passage that same year of the Hawaiian Employee Relations Act, nicknamed the Little Wagner Act, that covered agricultural workers, we started organizing the workers. I think you've got a majority see the plantation manager. If you can show applications signed by 51 percent, we will recognize you." That's how we got the agricultural units in.

Like I said, I left the Islands for a while, but came back on VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day), August 15, 1945. I wasn't gonna go back, but things got rough so I hustled back and stayed until the end of August 1946. The problem was that the workers were having a little dispute among themselves, a little disharmony you might say.

Some of the guys on the Big Island and the Jack Kawano faction in Honolulu was whipping up a little storm. Jack Hall was having to keep the peace. I figured out a scheme whereby we'd send a lot of these people out of the Islands so they couldn't engage in divisiveness. I called Harry Bridges and said, "I wish you'd blow a little smoke and tell these guys how good they are. Tell 'em you'd like to give 'em schooling and you're inviting them to the mainland as students." This is what he did. When they came back from the mainland they were different people.

The guys had been green and they had figured things out a lot faster than they did. But things just got so fast and so faster. The first contract they had in sugar wasn't much to speak about and they were pretty dissatisfied about that. But that was a start. Some of the red hot expected more in the way of benefits than what they originally got. To get into the plantations, you could pretty well figured there'd be a strike. During the war the sugar planters wanted to keep the war going, and course we got organized when we got that NLRB decision. But what we got in that first contract in 1945 was goddamn little and the sugar planters had no desire to do real collective bargaining. So with the war over, we knew what we were up against. We either had to change the whole body and did a job on those planters or they'd run us out of business.

To prepare we had a lot of educational meetings. We knew one of the questions in the workers' minds was, "How do you feed this bunch of people?" So Bob Robertson, the ILWU International vice-president, and I exorted the workers that we're gonna have to set up kitchens, send some of our people out to sea to catch fish, and send other into the hills to do some hunting if there was any game running around up there to shoot at. In the meantime we'd organize to ship rice to the Islands from the outside. We prepared for a long siege. When the strike came, it lasted for three months and all the planning paid off.

A bit before the strike the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association recruited 6,000 workers from the Philippines as potential strike breakers. I was there the day the first group came ashore in Hilo. We'd sent John Elise and another Filipino guy, Joe Donias, down to the Philippines on a freighter. They could speak the language and tell the guys about the union. Between the both of 'em, when the Filipino workers come down that gangplank, they had these big blue ILWU buttons on. The Filipino guys had all been organized into the union on the way over. Those goddamn planters were around there looking at all these guys, figuring what they were gonna do to our union. When those employers saw those buttons, man, their faces dropped a foot-and-a-half, you know? So then we raised a lot of hell because the accommodations the planters had for these people were the same as you do in cattle, only worse. We had a hell of a demonstration over that one.

When I left Hawaii that second time at the end of August 1946 it was the eve of the sugar strike. Back on the mainland I spent a good deal of time with Virginia Woods, one of the research workers in the ILWU. We were the ones who got the rice for the sugar strikers. First we got a commitment on rice from the rice mills over here. You had to go through the maritime commission to get a ship, and the guy sitting on that commission was an ex-shipowner. No surprise, we couldn't get our own ship, but we got enough space on this one vessel to get the rice to Hawaii. We had an idea of the rice was to show that the union could not only organize the people, but it could also deliver, because the Hawaiian strikers would starve 'em to death. Going back 50 years, the employers had starred many people to death in those islands during strikes before. So when our rice came through, it had a hell of a psychological effect. And, of course, the union won the strike, got some important concessions and survived in the Islands.

A powerful red-baiting campaign against the union got going the year after '46 sugar strike. A lot of the workers didn't pay any attention to it. It didn't affect them much. The workers in Hawaii remained pretty true to the people who had organized them. With the drive for union organization, I think the moment had arrived in Hawaii when things that had been brewing over time came to a head. The workers were tired of living in a sort of island reformatory school. That's what I would call living on a Hawaiian plantation before the union, where people were treated like kids who can't leave or go over the wall. Since the ILWU broke that, most of the workers remained loyal to it despite the red-baiting.
ENDORS CANDIDATES WIN! REGISTER TO VOTE
by Tom Price

W

IUW longshore workers and peace activists sued the City of Oakland over police brutality at an anti-war demonstration at the port April 7, 2003, their attorneys discovered the police had engaged in illegal surveillance of the protestors before the protest.

Over the next couple of years, ACLU lawyers also discovered a number of other cases where California law enforcement agencies similarly spied on and infiltrated legitimate, peaceful activist organizations and labor unions.

Most disturbingly, the justifications authorities gave for their actions had an anti-terrorism spin. Security concerns override all Constitutional liberties—suggest that what they have been doing so far is only the tip of the iceberg.

At a press conference in San Francisco July 27, the ACLU of Northern California released a report documenting numerous examples of unlawful police activities called "The State of Surveillance: Government Monitoring of Political Activism in Northern and Central California."

It details police spying in Oakland, Fresno, Sacramento, Santa Cruz and San Francisco. Students also faced infiltration and monitoring at UC. Berkeley, Stanford and San Francisco State University.

It also points out that since Sept. 11, 2001, with the help of $500 million in federal anti-terrorism money, local and state police agencies have been able to build their own central anti-terrorism command centers. Uniformed and plainclothes officers have developed their own homeland security units and more than 5000 local police officers have joined an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

The ACLU report documents how the Oakland police played a covert role in the April 7, 2003 demonstration at the Port of Oakland. That day a group of labor unions and peace groups joined to create an "Intelligence Task Force" to monitor the protests and hand out flyers, the ACLU report said.

Their demo ended in a police riot that injured 40 protestors. Nine ILWU workers who were well away from the picket line and waiting for an arbitrator to arrive were shot and wounded. Seven were also attacked and injured.

Prior to the April 7 demonstration, the FBI alleged there was a plot between government agencies, the Port of Oakland, the Oakland Police Department and private security firms. They put "peaceful demonstrators" under surveillance to see what was going to transpire April 7. There was direct collusion. The New York Times quoted then-Police Chief Richard Word saying he mobilized his troops at "the behest of the maritime community and its owners who wonder if the government and the police are working for the cops."

The cops brutally arrested Heyman while he tried to get his members away from police fire. Injured demonstrators later won a $2 million lawsuit from the city.

One of the report's key findings was the extent of spying going on between government agencies, the Port of Oakland, the Oakland Police Department and private security firms. They put "peaceful demonstrators" under surveillance to see what was going to transpire April 7. There was direct collusion. The New York Times quoted then-Police Chief Richard Word saying he mobilized his troops at "the behest of the maritime community and its owners who wonder if the government and the police are working for the cops."

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Mexican miners face off with

In the days that followed, mine managers began soliciting applications from workers for jobs when the mine reopened. Some of the very miners who were terminated may be accepted back as new employees—but with no seniority and no union contract. And not everyone will be going back. Those in active strike are on a blacklist.

On the day of the announcement, Sonora Governor [FIRST NAME TK] Bours Castel° issued arrest warrants against 21 strikers, seizing striking local unions offered to sit down with the company to work out a solution to the conflict, but Bours Castelo responded that the union contract doesn’t exist anymore.

The political atmosphere had no longer possible, he declared, “since the union no longer has any bargaining relations.”

These were the latest efforts by Mexico’s outgoing conservative administration to force an end to a labor war that has rocked the country for six months, a war that has the beneficiaries of Mexico’s privatization landrush worried and afraid. It is no coincidence that Fox moved quickly and fired a number of local union officials to crush the strike once Calderon, his hand-picked successor, declared himself the winner of Mexico’s last presidential election, the country’s new elite had no longer possible, he declared, “since the union no longer has any bargaining relations.”

Mexican law also gives workers the right to healthcare and housing, providing they register with the union and pay a small fee. In some cases, workers have used this right to negotiate better wages and working conditions.

In this election year, popular discontent with the impact of these reforms reached record levels. Fox, a former Coca Cola executive, sought to reassure Mexico’s new elite that the government would continue supporting the neoliberal policies that have benefited the country’s wealthy elite, how- ever, the workersunion’s members themselves decide. Prohibiting subcontracting would not affect Fox’s plans to privatize the country’s largest terminals. The impact on longshore wages was devastat- ing. In Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas, the two largest Pacific Coast ports, crane drivers made about $100-160/day before privatization.

Today they make $48-50.

The new wages, according to Gomez Urrutia, can use a legal procedure to choose a union leader, regardless of what the unioncontract’s members themselves decide. Mexican labor law, the labor secretary said, that the government would continue supporting the neoliberal policies that have benefited the country’s wealthy elite, however, the workersunion’s members themselves decide. Prohibiting subcontracting would not affect Fox’s plans to privatize the country’s largest terminals. The impact on longshore wages was devastat- ing. In Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas, the two largest Pacific Coast ports, crane drivers made about $100-160/day before privatization.

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Copper miners head out of the pit at the end of their shift.
Stockton longshoreman dies in port accident

Jose "Pepe" Perez Correa's long career as a longshoreman ended tragically Aug. 9 when his junior rat line JOB card was wrapped around the propeller hub and plunged into the Stockton Deep Water Channel. He was a few weeks short of his 55th birthday.

Correa started at the Port of Stockton as a card in 1950. In 1966, the ILWU accepted his "B" card, making him a full-fledged longshore Local 54 member for nearly 40 years. He probably holds the record as the oldest active member of Local 54.

Apparantly no one witnessed the accident. Divers found the truck in 32 feet of water.

Correa was born in Mexico and spent the last years of his life finding customers, but not the Port of Stockton. He worked in the canneries in the 1950s while he earned his high school diploma.

"He was still a hard working man on the job, he'd go down into the hold, he'd pull his gloves and keep up with 20-year-olds," Perez said.

For Chaplain Mike Teoro remembers Correa performing his job duties:

"He'd go up the gangway, right after the ship docked, and hook them up. He was the kind of guy that was like an ambassador, he had a smile for the crew and nice words for everybody. He was a great asset to the port."

Correa was liked by everyone, said Local 54 President Raul Davenport.

"He was respected as a hard worker who was everybody's friend," Davenport said.

Stockton growth continues

by Tom Price

A septuplet 75 miles from the ocean contains 54 Precision Dairy, a local dairy, businessmen, and recent improvements mean the growth can continue.

But there's some shedding and that was key to our expansion," said Steve Correa, president of Community Fuels, it will develop a multi-acre site with 40,000 square feet of warehousing for ILWU locals and divisions.

With 1,000 miles of waterway in the area, it's a glaring hole in our financial core fees. We have people to work here, that's how much impact this will make.

By any other notice issued by any affiliated ILWU local and division which represents the objector, this notice shall be superseded or amended.

This notice also applies to local dues and fees charged by their bargaining representative as explained here.

Please be advised, however, that financial core members may not be able to participate in or even attend ILWU meetings or any functions of the union that are limited to union members. In addition, a financial core member has no right to vote in elections as they are only registered workers. However, elections may be conducted to solicit input from members.

This notice may be superseded or amended by any other notice issued by any affiliated ILWU local and division after the date of this notice or the date of becoming a new hire or financial core member.

.respond

The port has positioned itself for expansion by taking over the U.S. Navy's Deep Water Channel. The channel has boomed in the last few years, that's tell-tale right there," Brueckner said. "We're getting a lot of business and that was key to our expansion."

Brueckner said. "We're getting a lot of business and that was key to our expansion."
Former Local 6 President Keith Eickman, 1913-2006

September 2006

by Harvey Schwartz
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

The DISPATCHER • 15

Keith Eickman (right) and LeRoy King during the Nestle strike in Salinas, Calif. in 1976.

Keith Eickman lost a much beloved leader and life-long activist when Keith Eickman of warehouse Local 6 passed away July 30. Eickman was a politically engaged youth in the 1930s, a warehouse worker by 1941 and a soldier in Europe during WWII. After the war he returned to the racially integrated local of his leadership. He was also a highly regarded Local 6 business agent, secretary-treasurer and a fixture in San Francisco community figure. In keeping with his steadfast devotion to the ILWU, at 92 Eickman was still president of the Local 6 Penuners when he died.

One of Eickman’s great contributions was in favoring incumbents over minority challengers. So, a black community, is a centerpiece of San Francisco’s black community, from 1946 to 1956. As a board of trustees member, and president, and a respected San Francisco community figure. At a time when the local’s leadership was entirely white. With a great influx of black workers into the Local 6, and the subsequent leadership changes, Eickman’s resignation after the new black representation among the officers was sorely needed. But the local’s election rules then greatly favored incumbents over minority challengers. So, when he entered office as a business agent in 1958, Eickman allied himself with the local’s young black members and used his influence during that 10-month strike, “He was the first elected officer who worked on getting representation for blacks at the highest level of the local,” LeRoy King said. “And a fixture in the black community. In keeping with his steadfast devotion to the ILWU, at 92 Eickman was still president of the Local 6 Penuners when he died.

“Keith was my best friend,” King said. “He was instrumental in getting Curtiss Hall Converted. Local 6 chose Keith as another black officer in 1969 when he broke up the old voting system, with its separate slates for black workers. But, he characterized Keith of that he consistently sought equity for us, but never stopped trying to bring all the people in the community together. He was a great humanitarian.”

Keith Eickman’s for 60 years. Hunter served long as a business agent, secretary-treasurer, and president and served on the International Council and the union’s San Francisco Legislative Station. The San Francisco Exploratorium and the Zoological Society. He actively supported the Labor Renaissance man, for his interests truly were boundless. Beside his commitment to politics—he was a true labor intellectual tutored by the school of hard knocks.”

Keith really didn’t have much formal education, but his interests and concerns in the world were very wide. He was a true labor intellectual tutored by the school of hard knocks.”

Eickman was born in Canada in 1913. He graduated from Mission High School in San Francisco in 1933, “right in the middle of the Great Depression,” as he recounted years later in a remarkable nine straight times between 1957 and 1968. Eickman was elected secretary-treasurer of Local 6 in 1970 and president in 1977. He held the latter position and served on the International Executive Board until his retirement in 1982. After he officially retired, “Eickman administered the Local 6 Warehousemen’s Welfare Fund for several years. He became an expert on health and welfare and kept this aspect of Local 6 afloat during a time of heavy assault by the employers.”

Albert Lannon was a Local 6 business agent through most of the 1970s. Lannon followed Eickman as president of Local 6 and served for six years.

“In the late 1970s and early 1980s Keith and I went through some hard times,” he said. “Plants were running away from San Francisco or were closing. The situation was beyond Keith’s control, but we were upset. There were a dozen revolutionary groups all clamoring for attention and claiming to know best. Yet through it all Keith kept the local on a steady course.”

Lannon experienced some similar pressures when he was in office. Keith bailed me out of political trouble inside the union many times,” he said. “I truly valued his counsel and we became very close friends. It always impressed me that Keith never became cynical and never succumbed to any of the temptations of union office. He remained vitally interested in people, in Local 6 and in his city to the end of his life.”

Keen Pecker, the current secretary-treasurer of Local 6, also knew Eickman well. “Back when I was a young steward at Gutierrez Chocolate Company, I was always ready to walk out at the drop of a hat,” he said recently. “Then one day Keith gave a speech that really sobered me up. He explained that in the 1930s you had only your pay check. There was no health and welfare, no vacation provision, no seniority, no overtime and no pension fund. You didn’t have much to lose, so it was easy to strike. But later there was so much in the package that you couldn’t just walk out whenever you felt like it. I never forgot that lesson.”

“Keith was a true friend and a mentor. He was always concerned about the people around him, about their families and about how they were doing. Keith really didn’t have much formal education, but his interests and concerns in the world were very wide. He was a true labor intellectual tutored by the school of hard knocks.”

Betty de Losada depicted Eickman as a Renaissance man, for his interests truly were boundless. “Keith had a commitment to politics he served on the ILWU Northern California District Council and the union’s San Francisco Legislative Committee—he was deeply involved in a variety of community affairs. A conservative for many years, Eickman was appointed to the San Francisco Parks and Recreation Commission in 1977. He was also a member of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

Eickman sat on the board of directors of RKQED, Northern California’s public broadcasting station, the San Francisco Exploratorium and the Zoological Society. He actively supported the Labor Archives and Research Center at San Francisco State University. He also gave the ILWU Legacy Fund $2,500 in 2000 to make possible the re-issue of my then out-of-print book, “The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division, 1934-1938.”

"Keith set an example of how you can be very strong, but very gracious, and at the same time remember what class you are from and be secure in that,” Pecker said.

Eickman was preceded in death by Nina Eickman, his wife, and Robin Eickman, his son and a union engineer, Peter Bissell, his stepson and an ILWU member, Patrick Mulkeen, his son-in-law and a union leader, Yonnee York, his sister, three grandchildren and countless grateful ILWU members and their families.

Family and friends will hold a memorial for Eickman at ILWU Local 34 hall at 4 Berry Street on Oct. 14 at 2 pm.
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