Liverpool 10th anniversary: Dockers gather to remember, rededicate

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Remembering the past to better the future

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

Time goes so fast in our hectic, modern world that taking the time to look back—even a short while—is hard to find. Seeing the patterns in those events and trying to figure out what they mean for our future is even harder. But what happens to the ILWU, our members, and their families, and what happens to the working people of this country and around the world depends on our figuring it out.

In late September and I 15 other ILWU officers and rank and file went to school, Great Britain. We went to commemorate a dock worker struggle 10 years ago that has defined port labor relations around the world ever since (see story page 3).

As part of an anti-union campaign in Great Britain in the 1990s conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s government abolished the country’s National Dock Labour Scheme set up after WWII that nationalized the ports and guaranteed job security for union dockers. The ports were privatized and casual, non-guaranteed wages and conditions, it could happen to any longshore worker. And in Los Angeles, dockers, some of the country’s strongest and most militant union workers, resisted the buyouts and held onto their jobs.

But in September 1995 a group of about 80 dockers set up a spontaneous picket line when about 20 of their co-workers were sacked and replaced by non-union workers. In response, the dockers, who had a history of solidarity, taking actions in support of South Africa’s anti-apartheid movement, against Chile’s military dictatorship and others, tried to organize an international movement in support of themselves this time.

The ILWU understood the significance of this episode early on, understood that if long-unionized dockers in a major world port could be quickly replaced by casual workers laboring without guaranteed wages and conditions, it could happen to any longshore union. Our members contributed heavily to the financial support of the unemployed Liverpool dockers while they kept up their picketing and fighting to get their jobs back.

In 1997 the Neptune Jade, a ship loaded by the employer that fired the Liverpool dockers, sailed into the Port of Oakland. ILWU members refused to cross a community picket line and wouldn’t touch the cargo. The ship sailed on to Vancouver, B.C. where ILWU members there also refused to load it. Japanese dockers who had been sacked and fired and replaced by non-union workers, in response, had a similar feelings when it went there. The ILWU bought the Liverpool dockers’ hopes, but was not by itself enough to win them back their jobs. The international dock workers movement was united and coordinated enough at that time to beat back this concerted attack on Liverpool.

Still our losses exposed things all of us in the international dockers movement learn from and must continue to learn from, things about solidarity in action, and about its strategic, coordin- ation, and time and targeted use.

At the gathering in Liverpool, leaders of docker unions around the world recommitted themselves to each other and the international movement to keep our ports union and safe. We have a variable the employers could never quite understand. They could never quite comprehend workers’ empathy and compassion for each other, in a word—solidarity.

At the gathering in Liverpool, leaders of docker unions around the world moved to unite to test the strength of ILA Charleston Local 1422 in January 2000, with targeted pressure on the employer that had used scab labor in Charleston. That pressure made the employer back down, and the right-wing state Attorney General spearheaded the case saw his union’s gains fall short of expectations.

In all their calculations, there was one thing they never factor in: the human var- iable to which the employers had no answer. The Liverpool dockers’ movement was united and coordinated enough at that time to beat back this concerted attack on Liverpool.

At the same time we learned the employers’ strategy against us. So we were not surprised when in 1996 Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Patrick’s Stevedoring moved against the Maritime Union of Australia. This time the international dockers movement mobilized quickly and with multiple actions. The ILWU took action against the first scab-loaded ship from Australia, the Columbus Canada, when it came to the U.S. Again, ILWU members, this time at the Port of Los Angeles, wouldn’t cross a community picket line to work the cargo. The ship was sent back down under and reloaded by union labor. Other docker unions around the world also responded immediately with solidarity actions, and the combined effort backed down our enemies.

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By Jack Heyman

Once again dockworkers from around the world met in Liverpool Sept. 23-24, this time not to co-ordinate solidarity actions for the Liverpool dockers, but to recall those unions that participated in the worldwide actions and learn the lessons of that struggle in preparation for future battles.

The Liverpool struggle began 10 years ago when young dockworkers had successfully picketed against the illegally imposed sackings by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. In 1997 they won their victory.

Starting the weekend’s main event was a spontaneous set up of a picket line for the financial hit its parent company, Neptune Jade, was due to receive from the dockworkers. Neptune Jade is part of the Neptune Lines, a recent spin off of the Neptune Group, which holds a 50% stake in Neptune Lines, a major shipping line.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) spoke poignantly about the practical reality of the state of trade unions and class struggle globally. He praised the Liverpool dockworkers for their courageous struggle and criticized Bill Morris, then-General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, for not supporting the strike.

Ken Riley, president of ILA Charleston longshore Local 1422, recounted how their contract struggle with Nordana Lines in 2000 and the subsequent Charleston 5 defense campaign was ultimately successful because of ILWU’s international dockworker links, especially the Coordinators of Spain, that were brought into play. These bonds were forged at international conferences in support of the Liverpool dockers.

In the tradition of Harry Bridges’ good Aussie friend, Tas Bull, then-head of the waterfront workers union, Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) spoke poignantly about the practical reality of the state of trade unions and of class struggle globally. He praised the Liverpool dockworkers for their courageous struggle and criticized Bill Morris, then-General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, for not supporting the strike.

The ITF should have played a stronger role, no matter how difficult, in making sure it was a win...not a loss,” Crumlin said. He said now the movement has “the experience to go forward” and “we’ve learned the lesson from the Liverpool struggle: unions must organize properly, support rank-and-file workers on the job, and organize globally.”

As an example, Crumlin cited the ILWU’s solidarity action during the MUA strike. The Columbus Canada had been loaded by scabs in Australia and because of the labor-community picket in the port of Los Angeles, the ship was forced to return to Australia to be loaded by union wharfies before it could be discharged on the US West Coast.

He pointed out that dockworkers’ unions are being targeted by multinational employers and the governments because of their progressive stand, including dock protests against wars in Vietnam and Iraq. “They are systematically taking us on because we are a threat to what they are doing to our societies and our global market,” Crumlin said. “We’ve identified the enemy and most of us here have looked the devil in the eye and said if we are prepared to stick together and work together, the devil always blinks.”

The Liverpool dockers knew they couldn’t mobilize mass picketing on the Mersey docks to stop scabbing. That key element of labor history because of its boldness, level of co-ordination and timing. He exhorted all dockworkers to move forward “and we’ve learned the lesson,” he said.

Staying silent has never brought victory to dockworkers, he said. Staying silent has been the dockworkers’ undoing.

There were many actions in support of the Liverpool dockers during their 2003-2005 two-and-a-half year struggle, but one stands out, the Neptune Jade, Liverpool dock stewards Terry Teguea said when introducing this session.

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We had expected the Senate to take up this issue several weeks ago, but Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) put a hold on the bill. At issue is a provision in the legislation that would allow companies with low credit ratings to beef up their pension contributions.

The sponsors of the legislation say it's a form of assurance that if companies go bankrupt, at least they will have put some money in their pension funds for current and future retirees. The requirement would kick in if a company's credit ratings went to junk bond status for two consecutive years.

But the United Auto Workers and the AFL-CIO say that's unfair. They say plenty of companies have fluctuating credit ratings, none of which are considered junk bond status, yet they keep their pensions. Secondly, if companies are struggling financially, as indicated by its low credit score, why penalize it by making it pay out cash that it needs for operations?

That might push it into bankruptcy and make it eliminate its pension plan or freeze pensions of workers participating in the plan.

Although the labor community is pleased that the Senate bill attempts to take action regarding the crisis in the airline pensions, there is great consternation that the single-employer plan provisions make workers pay the price for pension reform. In a letter to the Senate, the AFL-CIO said: "We can no longer tolerate caps which do not take into consideration the additional risks placed on single-employer plans through these new restrictions on benefit increases and freezes on benefit accruals as well as curvature on employer contributions." 

"Not only are arbitrary automatic limitations on pension accruals and benefit increases being placed on single employer plans, but, in many instances, they put rank-and-file workers at risk of employer manipulation of their pension plans to replace a defined benefit plan with a defined contribution plan," said Bill Samuel, Legislative Director of the AFL-CIO.

The legislation includes provisions sought by airline unions and carriers for leniency regarding their pension plans. Offering greater leniency would "dig that hole deeper and put more workers' pensions at risk," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Grassley (R-Iowa), whose committee shares jurisdiction over the legislation. "At some point, Congress has to say enough is enough."

He suggested he would scuttle the bill—along with its airline aid provisions sought by Delta Air Lines and United—rather than agree to more concessions.

Delta badly wants a provision that would allow carriers to spread pension plan payments over many years. The current Senate version is a 14-year provision, while Delta wants 25.

The outcome of the airline aid issue is particularly shaped by Sen. John Keating, flying under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, to terminate its pension plans. Keating gets "no shift responsibility for pension payments, up to certain limits, to the PBGC."

A number of labor unions along with their employers are working in a coalition to reform the pension laws. As flawed as the pension legislation may be, unions involved in the coalition have said they are planning to work with Multimember Plans (NCCP) including the Teamsters, Iron Workers and other unions, to advocate legislation that may in fact allow pension plan trustees to recognize other employee benefits that have been promised. Ancillary benefits are not the primary promised benefits to retirees who may include disability and certain other subsidized early pensions. In their view, we would be better to live with some cuts rather than have the plans fail.

We are living in an America where corporations continue to steal—legally—from the American people and from their employees. Last summer the courts agreed to let United Airlines renege on nearly $10 billion of pension promises to 21,000 of its workers.

But this isn't just about United. It's a national trend that is cutting its promises to workers. Many companies that are not shirking their pension obligations are also bankrupt or on the verge of declaring bankruptcy are switching their defined benefit pension plans—which provide a guaranteed retirement income closer to riskier defined contribution plans like the 401(k) that is dependent on the employer's discretion. The first to go are plans, to no plan at all.

ILWU longshore workers have a solid record of working together in an industry that is growing and profitable. If we are successful in getting the amendment that will exempt the ILWU-PMA plan from these new regulations, it will continue to work with our collective bargaining process.
How the other half percent die

by Jack Rasmus

After more than four years of incessant tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations, George W. Bush and Co. are now preparing to come back to the table for another $1 trillion tax cut at the expense of workers and consumers in America. Congress has passed record tax cuts every year from 2001 through 2004, with more than 80 percent being distributed to the wealthiest one percent of households paying progressively less. In 2005, the Bush tax cut of more than $700 billion over ten years will amount to no less than $1.6 trillion—80 percent of which once again will accrue to the wealthiest one percent of households and the largest corporations.

Bush’s tax cuts could pay for the alleged $3.4 trillion shortfall in Social Security, fully resolve the real growing crisis in Medicare funding and provide free prescriptions drugs for all Americans.

$1.6 trillion in tax cuts: that money would eliminate Bush’s alleged $3.4 trillion shortfall in Social Security, fully resolve the real growing crisis in Medicare funding and provide free prescriptions drugs for all Americans. To give a sense of the magnitude of the full picture. To cap off his tax legacy on behalf of corporate America in his last term, Bush wants to totally restructure the entire tax code. The campaign to do that kicked off recently with the release Sept. 30, 2005 of the final report of Bush’s appointed special Advisory Panel on Tax Reform. Expectations are that the panel will recommend, and Bush and Congress will eventually propose, not only further breaks for the wealthy and corporations, but also a scaling back of many of the token tax cuts given to workers and consumers between 2001-04 that were considered politically necessary at the time to ensure passage of Bush’s first-term tax cuts for the wealthy. In addition, the panel’s report is expected to launch a new assault on the few remaining benefits in the federal tax code that working class households have been able to take advantage of for many years, such as home mortgage interest, state and local tax deductions and deferral of taxes on health insurance premiums.


Unionists examine pollution health risks

by Bill Orton

Maritime trades workers toiling amidst the belches of truck exhaust and ship emissions face a dramatically heightened risk of contracting leukemia and other forms of cancer, according to experts who spoke to a gathering of union officials in Long Beach Sept. 23.

“The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles are the single largest source of harmful pollution in the South Coast Air Quality District,” said Richard Takushi-Druzy, an attorney for the International Longshoremen’s Association and a former adviser to the Clinton Administration’s EPA panel on environmental justice.

Statistics show that 70 percent of all cancer risk in Harbor area is due to diesel particulate matter, a situation now made worse by a ruling from a NAFTA panel that allows older, dirtier Mexican trucks into the United States.

“Exposure in the Harbor is 10 times or more that of the general population,” Takushi-Druzy said.

“Occupational cancers are an epidemic, as four out of 10 workers will contract cancer,” said Ralph Metzger, a toxic tort litigation lawyer whose clients have included leukemias and cancer patients whose illnesses were allegedly contracted from workplace exposure to products like benzene.

“I know the ILWU has seen large classes of lung cancer and ultimately, we’re all front-line workers,” Maritime Trades president Larry Barragan said.

Talk of toxic tort litigation and coalitions with environmentalists prompted intense debate, with Barragan calling the entire topic “highly controversial.” But all agreed that workers are the only line that suffer the greatest effects of workplace pollution.

“Workers are really the canaries of occupational cancers,” Metzger said. “A lot of your members are going to develop diseases that will be caused by exposure to chemicals in the workplace, like benzene. The rate of incidents is much less in the general population.”

Metzger pointed out other ways in which workplace pollution impacts lives, such as the equivalent of one million car trips, and older Mexican trucks spewing the equivalent of one million car exhaust each day.

“Where we live and work is the most important environment to focus on,” said Takushi-Druzy.

Representing the Union: Sam Kagel and the Longshoreman

By Harvey Schwartz

This is the second in a series of oral history articles featuring the legendary San Kagel, who retired as the Labor Bureau’s Arbitrator for the longshore industry in 2002 after 54 years on the job. In the 1930s, well before he began his storied career as an impartial judge, Kagel was an economics graduate student and then a union advocate with the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau, a consulting firm that represented organized workers in negotiations, mediations and arbitrations.

Kagel was employed with the Labor Bureau from 1932 to 1942. He left to serve in the War Manpower Commission when the U.S. entered World War II. After the war ended in 1945 he became an impartial arbitrator and attended law school. By the 1970s he was the nation’s leading figure in labor arbitration.

During the great 1934 West Coast maritime strike, Kagel was a close consultant to Harry Bridges, the longshore union and other waterfront worker groups. His testimony about that phase of his seven decades in labor relations was the focus of last month’s oral history article.

This month the spotlight is on Kagel’s association with the warehouse union in the five years following the 1934 strike. Those were the days of the longshore union’s triumphant organizing drive into the San Francisco Bay Area warehouse industry, that became known as the “marine inland.” As a representative of the longshore union’s new warehouse organizing committee, Kagel participated in the events of that period on a daily basis.

I was invited to participate in the 1939 oral history collection conducted by the ILWU Coast Labor Relations Committee to interview Kagel. Those 1989 discussions provided the basis for this article.

In the 1930s there were lots of warehouses in San Francisco and the rest of the Bay Area, and a big distributing center. You had public warehouses and warehouses in grocery, drug, hardware and coffee. All of them were part of the waterfront, really. Right after the 1934 strike most were still unorganized. But soon there was a conscious decision to move off the “front” and on to the warehouses. And for good strategic reason. They were easy pickings, too, because they were paying 45, 55, 65 cents an hour with hardly any other conditions. Those wages were low even for the Great Depression.

To get an idea of what the hell a union was all about, ultimately that led her to call a lot of people working in the big Emporium store and they arranged to have meetings at night. Bingo! You’ve got an organization going.

July 2005

Local 6 President Eugene Peton trying to conduct union business during a labor dispute at Euclid Candy Company in San Francisco just after the warehouse “march inland.”
the Warehouse “March Inland,” 1934-1939

In June 1938 St. Surr ors went back to Washington, D.C., to argue before the high court. The attorneys for the ILWU were there. When Paul came back from Washington he called me up. He said, "I don’t think I’m going to make it." I asked, "Why do you say that?" He said, "Because of some of the questions these people asked me." I said, "Well, congratulations, I’m glad to hear that."

Paul was right. The majority of the Supreme Court justices held that Santa Cruz’s business did affect interstate commerce. Therefore the Santa Cruz judgment was considered, in legal language, a “leading case,” because it decided an important element of the statute in question. One result was that it widened the overall application of the Wagner Act.

In the early organizing years, 1935, ’36, ’37, there were two basic issues that always came up. This was all part of the “march inland,” when everybody was organizing—hotel workers, grocery clerks—not just our warehousemen. One issue was that the unions wanted to have the right to arbitrate discharge cases. The employers wouldn’t agree to that. The other issue was that we wanted to be members of the union, or we were in or out. Paul would call up Bill Ingram and discuss it with him. He said, "I offered, ‘Do you want me to arrange a meeting with the union?’ No, he didn’t. ‘Well,’ I said, ‘I’ll be in my office tomorrow if there’s anything you want.’ And they left.

I immediately telephoned Jack Shelly, the secretary of the San Francisco Labor Council. He said, ‘I’ll take care of it.’ He called the chief of police, whose men visited Gordon at the St. Francis Hotel, where he was staying. They asked him what he was doing in town. He said he was there to introduce a new cleaning process.

When he left the hotel, Gordon was asked, “Who were you working with?” He said, “I was with the ILWU.” He was asked, “What were you doing?” He said, “I was trying to organize.” He was asked, “Why did you leave?” He said, “I was asked to leave.”

A little while later, Paul got a call. The police were outside his house. Paul was told that he had been noticed by a man who had been seen in the area. The police were going to take him to the airport. He put him on a plane headed East. He said, “I’ll be in my office tomorrow if there’s anything you want.”

It was during this time that Paul got the master contract in 1939. He sided with, for example, Paton and I knew that when we got into mediation we would end up with a master contract. There was no way we were going to get the employers to agree to permit us to whiskap. But we didn’t agree and say, “Hey, they won.” You don’t do that. You suddenly come to the realization that, “Are we going to stay another 60 days with nothing happening and we’ve got our people not working?”

Interestingly, Harry thought we should take the master contract all along. He sided with, for christ’s sake, Adrien Falk, one of the main employers. We had a public meeting with the world there and everybody was there. Harry said, “You guys are going to have to agree to a master contract.” And so we did. We also got some decent concessions in the arbitration proceedings that settled the details of the master contract in 1939.

Around this time the ILWU boycotted the export of scrap iron to Fascist Japan to protest that country’s invasion of China. I participated in the pickets lines down on the waterfront. My point here is that this boycott was not related to negotiations or contracts. The ILWU was always socially minded, and not just the ILWU. The union movement never said, “All we’re interested in is how much money we’re getting today,” because labor by its very history was part of a struggle for a better world.

During a lot of other strikes, including warehouse and grocery, we would set up picket lines outside the stores. Paul was always very dedicated to that. He would come in and say, “What are we going to do for a picket line?” He would come in and say, “What are we going to do for a picket line?”

I knew Ingram didn’t care about the union’s point of view. You think he’d be happy with the idea that the union wanted to be secure but it could beat the rate of the employer every year. Of course not. So I told him a union was like his business. You had to have a certain amount of money to survive. You’ve got rent, secretaries and so forth. He listened and listened. Then he says, “I can understand that.”

One day while there was a grocery strike going on, “Navy” Bill Ingram came up me. Ingram was the football coach at U.C. Berkeley who had his players scab on the longshoremen during the 1934 strike. He’d been dumped as coach and had been appointed head of labor relations for Safeway. He wanted to know what this closed shop was all about. Obviously, his background was not in labor relations.

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Well, that grocery strike finally ended and we got the closed shop.

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I can tell you now that Bill Ingram settled more closed shop provisions for the unions than we ever got by economic strength.

About the discharge clause, well, we fought through the employers’ heads that if you don’t have some kind of internal machinery to settle these beefs, the unions would have to strike every time there was a discharge or a suspension. Many of the employers could ultimately see that, “cause it made sense. That’s how we got arbitration clauses written into so many of the early contracts.

As is generally known, the ship owners tried unsuccessfully to bribe Harry during the 1934 strike. He even cited a Matson Navigation Company source on this in a memoir I wrote. Still, in my experience there were actually very few underhanded efforts to end labor disputes in those early days, or even after. Our area of this country was always pretty clean.

One time, though, I was in a San Francisco saloon called The Streets of Paris. This was 1937, ’38. I was waiting to meet with a guy who was coming from a union meeting. It was after ten o’clock at night and there was hardly anybody in the place. I was sitting there reading the newspaper when three guys came in. One was a little short stubby guy. The other two were great big monsters. They walked straight up to me.

I looked at these two big guys, who were what we called “goons” in those years. They were dressed in long black overcoats. They put me down on the waterfront. My point there is that this boycott was not related to negotiations or contracts. The ILWU was always socially minded, and not just the ILWU. The union movement never said, “All we’re interested in is how much money we’re getting today,” because labor by its very history was part of a struggle for a better world.

So the employers as a whole locked out all the Local 6 workers in the city by moving a boxcar containing non-union products from warehouse to warehouse. That car became famous around town as “the hot boxcar.” Local 6’s members wouldn’t work its contents. The whole industry remained down for two months with the local insisting it would not give up the whiskap or accept a master contract. That lockout was front page news for weeks in San Francisco.

I used to discuss the situation daily with Paton, who was now president of Local 6. We always got the early editions of the San Francisco Chronicle to read Paul C. Smith’s blasts at us. Smith was the editor of the newspaper. He had not been an unreasonable, anti-union guy before. Finally we decided we would write him a letter asking him to mediate. He accepted.

Paton and I knew that when we got into mediation we would end up with a master contract. There was no way we were going to get the employers to agree to permit us to whiskap. But we didn’t agree and say, “Hey, they won.” You don’t do that. You suddenly come to the realization that, “Are we going to stay another 60 days with nothing happening and we’ve got our people not working?”

The “hot boxcar” during the 1938 San Francisco warehouse lockout. The rail car was loaded with scrap products and moved from plant to plant by order of the city’s employers, who used the ploy to lock out the union’s members.
ST. LOUIS (PAI)—Declaring they want to devote three-fourths of their new group's money to organizing, leaders of the Teamsters Union and other representative labor unions formally established the Change to Win federation Sept. 27 in St. Louis.

The federation's unions have more than 6 million members. They are the Service Employees International Union; Food and Commercial Workers, the Laborers, the Carpenters, UNITE HERE; and the Teamsters. Of those, all but the Laborers—who will leave soon—and the United Farm Workers are former member unions of the AFL-CIO.

The new group, to be headquartered in Washington, D.C., will have Secretary-Treasurer Anna Burger as its chair and Edgar Romney, Executive Vice President of UNITE HERE, as its Secretary-Treasurer. SEIU's organizing director, Tom Woodruff, becomes Change to Win's organizing director—a key post—and Greg Tarpanian moves from the New York-based Labor Research Association to become Change to Win's full-time executive director.

Burger, who will chair the monthly meetings of the new group's 10-person board and as its chair face, will keep her SEIU post. Woodruff will head its Strategic Organizing Center. The center “will lead federal, union-wide coordinated growth initiatives, leveraging the collective resources of its affiliated federations’ ‘growth cards’ and in their organizing plans,” it’s a Change to Win statement said.

But there is more, or maybe less, to the Change to Win bandwagon than meets the eye. That’s because the figure includes not just what the new federation and its unions would spend on organizing, but what their locals, councils and affiliates spend, too.

And spending next year will increase only slightly, using the funds the three unions would contribute, send to the AFL-CIO in dues—minus the 25 cents per member per year they’re going to send to Change to Win.

And they stated that their core industries—hotels, hospitals, restaurants, construction, plans, transportation and others—have 50 million workers, but only 6 million are unionized. Workers they will pursue hold jobs that cannot be outsourced or moved overseas, they added.

“We commit ourselves to the 50 million unorganized workers and to rebuild the labor movement,” Burger said.

Many of those jobs are held by minority group members, immigrants or both, and the convention showcased statements from African-American and Latino/Latina workers. Change to Win also demands full legalization of immigrants.

Key concepts of Change to Win’s program include:

• Concentrating organizing in each union’s “core industries,” such as transportation for the Teamsters, according to Hoffa. Change to Win, which Burger and the union president are in charge of, coordinating body, would mediate and decide conflicts.

• Using the three-fourths of the $16 million that Change to Win will collect in per-capita assessments from member unions for organizing and implementing joint organizing.

Change to Win leaders confirmed contacts with other unions about joining their new federation, but said they are not actively soliciting them. A prime target mentioned was the unaffiliated 2.7-million-member National Education Association, the nation’s largest union. Asked specifically if NEA would be asked to join, SEIU President Andrew Stern said no.

Using the labor’s financial resources, sources such as money in health and pension funds, to other union organizing goals. Laborers Union President Terry O’Sullivan said that includes $200 million in so-called “Taft-Hartley” pension funds in the construction industry, and $2.6 billion in public employee pensions.

Making the areas of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama devastated by Hurricane Katrina a test case for a new union role, not just immediate relief, but training area workers to rebuild communities. “It’s an opportunity to present ourselves in the South, where the labor movement is weak and even unions under national contracts, such as IBT master freight agreements, have lower wages, Hofa added.

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The Change to Win leadership. (left to right) Jim Hoffa, General President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Edgar Romney, Secretary-Treasurer of the CTW Federation; Andy Stern, SEIU President; Joe Hansen, UFCW President; Anna Burger, Chair of CTW Federation; Terry O’Sullivan, LIUNA General President; Arturo Rodriguez, United Farm Workers President; Geraldyn Lyth, UFCW International Vice President.

The Change to Win leadership. (left to right) Jim Hoffa, General President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Edgar Romney, Secretary-Treasurer of the CTW Federation; Andy Stern, SEIU President; Joe Hansen, UFCW President; Anna Burger, Chair of CTW Federation; Terry O’Sullivan, LIUNA General President; Arturo Rodriguez, United Farm Workers President; Geraldyn Lyth, UFCW International Vice President.

Schwarzenegger vetoes trucker bill

P

ort truckers lost a round in their efforts to gain a voice on the job when California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill that would have recognized their collective bargaining rights.

Senate Bill 848, introduced Feb. 25 by Sen. Joseph Dunn (D-San Diego), would have established a framework for negotiating and organizing. “It’s typical Schwarzenegger—if anyone in the business community objects to legislation, he’s going to veto it,” said Chuck Mack, Director of the Teamsters Port Division. “If it has anything to do with labor and there’s an objection—it’s an automatic veto.”

The steamship companies that contract with the truckers have anti-trust immunity and are allowed to fix shipping rates among themselves. These immunizes allow the companies to engage in collective activities to increase their market clout, and these activities decrease the ability of owner-operator truckers to negoti-

ate for higher rates,” the bill reads.

Anti-trust laws deny port truckers the same privileges.

The bill would cover drivers who

own only one tractor and drive under agreements with maritime shippers. Sen. Dunn’s reasoning is that the truckers are kept unfairly poor and cannot maintain their rigs. Therefore the citizens suffer the pollution and pay the medical bills for underpaid workers. While the National Labor Relations Act bans unionization by independent contractors, “it does not preempt California from passing labor laws to protect its environment and its workers, according to the bill.

The bill’s supporters argued that since truckers provide their own tractors but in every other way use the employers’ facilities, they are no more independent than mechanics who bring their own tools to work.

Schwarzenegger could have looked like a fighter for the underdog if California too. Mack and the head and tried to solve the problems of port congestion and the exploitation of port truckers. But he didn’t sound like the action hero in his veto.

“Cutting is not the same as the California Senate, where the public is used to seeing the governor, we will get it signed.”

The litigious firestorm this bill would surely ignite is counter-productive to the cooperative work that must be accomplished to cap-

ture the economic potential afforded by growth in international trade,” according to Mack, who is also Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 70 and a member of the International Executive President, promised more action next year.

“This veto only reinforces what we already know about this guy—he’s in the pocket of big business and he doesn’t know how to do business, according to Mack.

“Schwarzenegger’s veto message read: “We’ll re-introduce the bill, we’ll get it passed and, when we get a new governor, we will get it signed.”
LEAD seminar focuses on democracy and participation

ILWU members from all sections of the union gathered in Palm Springs, California, last month to participate in the latest Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) institute.

"This is the most diverse and representative group of participants we've had come out for this type of training," said ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. The 85 participants, including 23 women, came from all industries and regions under the union's jurisdiction to spend the week of Sept. 19-23 at the Riviera Resort learning about "the Tools and Traditions of Democracy" in the ILWU—which focused on how to run efficient, productive, and democratic membership meetings. Special attention was also paid to building personal skills in achieving effective decision-making and maximum member participation in the life of the union.

"What we are about in the ILWU," said International President Jim Spinosa in his opening remarks, "is democracy—rank and file democracy from the bottom up in the ILWU and throughout organized labor. From real democracy we build real unity.

The week-long program began with an overview by Professor Elaine Bernard of the Harvard University Trade Union Program about the importance of union democracy to members—and about how essential unions are in fighting for and defending democracy for all workers.

Joel Schaffer and Rick Oglesby of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service led a day-long workshop on how ILWU members can work better together in committees and meetings, and why rules are necessary in a democracy. Max Vokich, member of clerks Local 52 and the International Executive Board, presided over a lively session on Robert’s Rules of Order and other ILWU meeting procedures.

Skill-building sessions took place between several presentations about ILWU principles and traditions. Pensioner and former Coast Committeeman Bill Ward and Ian Raskin of the Harry Bridges Project painted a picture of the democratic discussion and debate involved around negotiation of the historic longshore agreement in 1960 known as the Modernization and Mechanization Agreement. Ah Quon McEllrath, retired Local 142 social worker, evoked the threats posed to civil liberties by anti-communism in the 1950s and anti-terrorism today. On Thursday, the participants rose to their feet in response to a stirring performance by Local 23 member Zeek Green about the plight of workers and the promise of solidarity.

A research team from the University of Washington’s Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies under the leadership of Professor David Olson reported on trends in member participation in the ILWU. The team, including graduate students Jon Agnone, Julianna Rigg, and Ali Waggener Boyd, also engaged the LEAD participants in a dynamic discussion about the core values of the ILWU to help the team develop a survey among new members about how union membership affects attitudes and opinions about a variety of workplace and union issues.

The nuts and bolts of financial administration and local autonomy were laid out by a panel of warehouse Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt Sr., IBU National Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast and ILWU Research Director Russ Bargmann. What the participants learned about democracy and meetings and finances were put to the test in a lively afternoon of mock membership meetings convened to deal with declining member participation.

ILWU Vice Presidents Bob McEllrath and Wesley Furtado participated throughout the week and, along with Coast Committeeman Joe Wenzl, helped facilitate Friday’s brainstorming session on new opportunities for organizing led by Organizing Director Peter Olney.

Participants exchange insights and experiences about challenges of working constructively with different kinds of personalities in their union and community (foreground, back to camera, Tony Flaherty [Local 7] and Rachel Lohse [Local 30]; left to right Marc Cuevas [Local 54], Karen Bonkoski [Local 5], Angel Blanco [Local 13], Jerry LeMaster [Alaska Longshore Division]).

"This kind of brainstorming always helps us," said Olney. "We get new leads for organizing, which strengthens the entire union in every way imaginable."

Many of the conference materials will soon be available on the member section of the ILWU website (www.ilwu.org).

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BUILDING THE COAST COMMUNICATIONS TEAM 
LONGSHORE COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR IN JANUARY

During our Longshore Division’s 2002 contract negotiations, the media became a key factor in influencing the public opinion of the community, labor, business interests and politicians. What people said about our negotiations impacted the contract bargaining process and how the politicians reacted to our contract struggle. Based on this reality, the Coast Committee, with recommendation from the Coast Public Relations Committee and approval from the Longshore Division Caucus, has committed to improving our communications program in a fundamental and critical aspect of this program is to form an ILWU Coast communications team that, under the direction of the local officers and Coast Committee, assists the ILWU in promoting its messages during the 2008 contract bargaining sessions and beyond.

On Monday, January 23 through Friday, January 27, 2005, the ILWU Coast Committee, in conjunction with the Coast Public Relations Committee, will conduct a Communications seminar in Palm Springs, California at the Riviera Hotel. This seminar will include as instructors labor communication professionals with expertise in areas such as public speaking (press conferences, community meetings, outreach), print media (writing flyers, newsletters, press releases), audio/visual presentations (video and photographic), and e-activism (using e-mail and the internet to network, mobilize, and disseminate information).

APPLICATION PROCESS
The Coast Committee is looking for registered ILWU members who are committed to promoting the message of the ILWU and who will make a three-year commitment to the ILWU Coast Communications team. Registered rank-and-file longshore members interested in becoming part of the team can pick up applications from their local officers. Applicants must turn in one copy to their local president and send one copy separately to: The ILWU Coast Committee, 1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109. Application deadline: November 21, 2005.

SELECTION PROCESS
With the advice of local officers and the Coast Public Relations Committee, the Coast Committee will select members to participate in the seminar for eligibility on the ILWU Coast Communications team (requests for additional member participation will be considered based on space availability).

ROOM ACCOMMODATIONS, TRAVEL, PER DIEM
The Coast Committee will provide room accommodations, reimbursement for travel and per diem. Locals may choose to pay wages at their own discretion.

THE ILWU OFFICIALS WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE MEMBERS WHO DONATED THEIR TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY TO OUR 2004 POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

The ILWU International leaders would like to thank all the members who donated their time, energy and money to our 2004 political campaign. We are proud of the stand the ILWU made in opposition to the Bush administration. Although we did not prevail then, events of the last year have proven us right and polls show that the majority of Americans now agree with our position. All those who contributed to our Political Action Fund in 2004 will be receiving a commemorative pin and window decal (pictured above) acknowledging their participation.

Now we are gearing up for the 2006 election cycle. The Republicans are vulnerable as the Iraq War drags on with continuing carnage and costs and no end in site, as Bush strategist Karl Rove appears to be facing indictments, and as Republican Senate leader Bill Frist and Republican House Majority Leader Rep. Tom DeLay are facing criminal charges. We stand a chance next year of stripping them of their hold on the Senate or House or both and block Bush’s continuing anti-workers agenda.

But to do that will require another all-out effort, even more than we did in 2004. We will need all our members to contribute financially as well as be ready to volunteer in our campaign efforts as the election approaches. Please fill out the attached form and send it with a check to:

ILWU Political Action Fund
1188 Franklin Street 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109

All contributors will receive the new 2006 Political Action Fund commemorative pin. Contributions from outside the ILWU’s solicitable class will be screened and returned.

ILWU FEDERAL POLITICAL ACTION FUND
The Officers of ILWU request that you make a voluntary contribution of at least $90 or more to the ILWU International Political Action Fund (PAF). The purpose of this fund is to make expenditures in federal and/or local elections to protect and advance the interests of ILWU members and the entire ILWU community.

The contribution requested is voluntary and is separate from your union dues and is not a condition of membership. You may give more or less than the amount requested and there will be no reprisals if you give less than the requested amount. Your contribution is not tax deductible.

Please send a check made payable to ILWU PAF for at least $50 or more, complete the requested information below, and mail it in this envelope. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH. Thanks!

Any donation $500 and over makes you a President’s Club Member and entitles you to receive a PAF jacket. Please circle your size: S - M - L - XL - 2XL - 3XL - 4XL.

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NEPTUNE JADE
continued from page 3
continue to pursue picket captain and IBU member Robert Irminger and try to force him to name others on the line. After Bay Area longshore locals shut down the Port of Oakland July 22, rallied in front of the PMA's Oakland office and marched 1,000 strong to the courthouse demanding that the charges be dropped, and that the Coast Committee threatening coastwise action if PMA carried out the prosecution of Irminger, the employers gave in. The Labor Video Project produced the video. Following the video showing, Steve Zeltzer of the LVE chaired the event with Irminger and Heyman speaking, followed by discussion. Irminger chronicled how the Neptune Jade sailed into the port of Oakland Sept. 28, 1997 from Thamesport, England, a port operated by Mersey Docks and Harbor Company which had sacked the 500 Liverpool dockers. It was the second anniversary of the strike. Labor and community activists set up a picket line in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers. At this 10th anniversary commemoration Liverpool, steward Terry Teagasc presented Irminger with a plaque for his dedication to the struggle.

For three-and-a-half days longshore workers refused to cross the picket line, despite a court injunction ordering them to do so. Finally, the Neptune Jade, desperate to unload its cargo in a U.S. West Coast port but finding no safe haven, departed for Vancouver, Canada, another ILWU port. Labor activists across the border also set up a picket, forcing the Neptune Jade to sail for Japan. There Japanese dockworkers, well aware of the hot cargo on board, didn't touch the ship. Finally the ship sailed to Taiwan where the cargo was discharged and the Neptune Jade, now internationally notorious, was renamed. Such power of coordinated action by workers in three different countries sent shivers down the spine of maritime companies around the globe.

The website of the Neptune Jade Defense Committee was swamped by visits from global corporations fearful of the specter of labor solidarity. At the Longshore Caucus held after the ILWU Convention in Portland in 2000, attorney Rob Remar, who was instrumental in helping to pilot the Neptune Jade campaign through legal channels, explained that we live in a country with repressive anti-labor legislation like the Taft-Hartley Act which makes solidarity actions, or as employers say, "secondary boycotts," difficult for unions to organize. "The significance of the Neptune Jade action lay in the fact that the ILWU was able to implement its policy of support for their Liverpool brothers while defending itself against legal attacks," he said.

At the Liverpool gathering Irminger pointed out how the Neptune Jade action influenced later events. "It was the Neptune Jade action which strengthened the links between Bay Area organized labor and community groups, preceding and laying the basis for a global justice movement," he said. In 1999, he pointed out, ILWU and other trade unionists marched with young protesters demonstrating against the WTO in Seattle. And again, in 2001, global justice activists successfully picketed an Italian ship in the Port of Oakland to protest the killing of a young anti-capitalist globalization protester in Genoa.

Jack Heyman, who had been sent to Liverpool by then-ILWU President Brian McWilliams early in their struggle in 1996, drew a direct connection from Liverpool to the Neptune Jade to the ILWU's contentious 2002 contract negotiations and the anti-Iraq War protests. When PMA and the Bush administration threatened the ILWU during the 2002 contract negotiations, he said, these activists and dockworkers internationally were readily mobilized to support the ILWU, from marches and rallies in San Francisco to parrying with right-wing politicians in the Australian press.

Heyman said when anti-war activists demonstrated in the Port of Oakland at the start of the Iraq War, longshore workers refused to cross their picket lines as they had done six years earlier in the Neptune Jade protest. One difference, he noted, was that Oakland mayor Jerry Brown himself participated in the Neptune Jade picket, but he now supports the bloody police repression of the anti-war demonstration.

"The veil of 9/11 "national security," he said, "had been used by the government to cover the peaceful protesters as "terrorists." Scores were shot with so-called less-than-lethal weapons, including nine longshore workers and their Business Agent Heyman was arrested while trying to protect his members against the police assault. Although the port was not shut down, the case against the police, ILWU Local 10 v City of Oakland, is scheduled for court in January.

"Solidarity Has No Borders: the Journey of the Neptune Jade" is available for $20 (plus $5 handling fee) from its producer: Labor Video Project PO Box 72027 San Francisco, CA 94172 Voice: 415-282-1908 / Fax: 415-695-1369 Email: lvp sf @ lab ornet.org Fifty percent of the proceeds will go to the legal defense campaign to expose the brutal police attack on peaceful anti-war protesters and longshore workers in the Port of Oakland in April 2003. The campaign is being organized by the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee.

ILWU Columbia River District Council President Jeff Smith (center) received the Pat Quigley Award for outstanding contributions to labor's political program at the Oregon AFL-CIO Convention in Portland Oct. 18.

Pat Quigley was a longtime member and president of Asbestos Workers Local 36 and a political activist. He died several years ago from liver cancer at the age of 52. The Oregon AFL-CIO established an award in his memory to be given to a union member active in politics. The award was presented by Tim Nesbitt, President of the Oregon AFL-CIO (left) and Brad Witt, Secretary-Treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO (right).

In making the presentation Nesbitt said Smith deserved the award for his never-say-die enthusiasm and tireless commitment to Oregon's union movement, for feeding hundreds of Labor 2004 volunteers, for fueling the federation's best-ever political mobilization in 2004 and for always being there for his brothers and sisters on the front.
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Books and videos about the ILWU are available from the union's library at discounted prices!

**BOOKS:**

The ILWU Story: unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and dozens of rare photos of the union in action. $15.00

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Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s: By Bruce Nelson: the most complete history of the origins, meaning, and impact of the 1934 strike. $13.00

The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront: By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. $15.00 (paperback)

A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco: By David Selvin: the newest and best single narrative history about the San Francisco events of 1934. $16.50

The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938: By Harvey Schwartz: new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union's organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. $9.00

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We Are the ILWU: A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about what the union meant in their lives and what it needs to survive and thrive, along with film clips, historical photos and an original musical score. DVD or VHS version $5.00

Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges: A 17-minute VHS video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorializes Harry Bridges through still photographs, recorded interviews, and reminiscences. Originally produced for the 1990 memorial service in San Francisco. $28.00

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