



VOICE OF THE ILWU

HONOLULU HAWAII
LOCAL 142

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October 2003

Hawaii unions say "no" to George W. Bush



The ILWU joined thousands of workers from various Hawaii unions on October 23 in a demonstration to protest President Bush's union busting and anti-working family policies. The demonstration, also attended by progressive organizations and community members, was held at the main entrance of the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel in Waikiki where Bush was scheduled to attend a Republican Party fundraiser. The President avoided the demonstration by slipping into the hotel through a side entrance.

More local convention highlights

ILWU International Attorney Robert Remar

Robert Remar has been a partner in the law firm of Leonard Carder, LLP of San Francisco since 1989. The law firm has stood firmly on the side of workers and had provided legal representation to the labor movement for over 60 years.

The firm's founders, Norman Leonard and William Carder have represented the International Longshore & Warehouse Union since the 1940s, defended Harry Bridges and other accused Communists in the 1950s, and countless other labor unions over the years.

More recently, Remar and the Leonard Carder firm represented the ILWU during the West Coast longshore negotiations of 2002, in numerous organizing drives, and in some unusual cases where union leaders were sued by employers for demonstrating in support of Liverpool workers and in another case where nine longshore members were injured when Oakland police fired on a peaceful anti-war protest in April 2003.

Remar is now advising the ILWU on numerous legal issues dealing with port security and the so-called Patriot —continued on page 2



Retired ILWU Social Worker Ah Quon McElrath

Ah Quon McElrath first became involved with the ILWU when she worked in a soup kitchen during the 1946 Sugar Strike. She went on to become the ILWU's first full-time social worker, where she helped to build the union's membership services program. She was responsible for providing social service, contractual benefit and

Harry Bridges Scholar/Actor Ian Ruskin



family health education to ILWU workers.

Ah Quon embodies the values, the conscience, and the very soul of the —continued on page 3

Ian Ruskin acted the part of former ILWU President Harry Bridges, as if Bridges had come back to life and was addressing the ILWU Local 142 Convention and commenting on the important issues of today. Ruskin, acting as Bridges, had a lot to say about the Bush Administration's war on Iraq and the attack on civil liberties.

Ruskin graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and has worked extensively in theater, television and film.

Ruskin is the founder and current director of The Harry Bridges Project, an organization dedicated to promoting the legacy of Harry Bridges. Bridges (1901-1990) was one of the "founding fathers" of the ILWU, giving leadership to the union from 1933 until his retirement as ILWU president in 1977. Bridges passed away on March 30, 1990.

Considered one of America's greatest labor leaders, Bridges helped create a union based on rank-and-file democracy, racial equality, solidarity with workers throughout the world, and a belief that unions and its members should be actively involved in social and political issues.

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Amfac Kaanapali workers keep jobs, get severance

KAANAPALI, Maui—Sixty workers of the Kaanapali Golf Course will receive almost one million dollars in severance and vacation pay from former owner Amfac-JMB, as required by the ILWU union contract. According to Amfac management, the workers deserve every penny.

The golf course is now owned by the Hawaii Employees' Retirement System, which took possession of the property after Amfac's Pioneer Mill defaulted on a \$40 million loan. The golf course was collateral for the loan. Most of the workers continued their employment with the new company, Kaanapali Golf Management, under the same terms and conditions as before.



John Kuia (left) started working at the Kaanapali Golf in 1960, right after high school. No one knew what a golf course was in those days. John is now an electrical foreman. Harry Keahi (right) was 15 years old when he started working at the golf course in 1960. His first job was clearing kiawe bushes and picking up rocks for \$1.35 an hour. He now operates heavy equipment.



ADDRESS LABEL

Rob Remar: National Security Legislation impacts longshore jobs

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Act which threatens to undermine many of our constitutional rights. In his speech to the Convention, Remar focused on how these new laws affect dock workers.

There's a lot of changes happening in the area of transportation, in particular. There's several new laws that have been passed. You've heard about the first one. The U.S.A. Patriot Act. It's gotten some press, hopefully you've heard about some of the repressive pieces of that legislation. It provides for such things as the FBI and other intelligence agencies of the government to be able to, without a warrant, and without really much in the way of any cause, snoop around and do surveillance. They can even monitor the types of books that people are pulling out of libraries and reading on the Internet. These are some of the features of the U.S. Patriot Act. But I'm going to be focusing on how these national security laws actually directly impact on workers.

There's a piece of the U.S.A. Patriot Act that requires all drivers of hazardous materials or all drivers of vehicles that have the capacity to carry 16 passengers to be subject to new security background checks. There's going to be all sorts of new requirements for security measures in the ports and in all modes of transportation. I'm talking not just about air travel which is the obvious one since 9/11, but rail, trucking, maritime, any operation on any vessel, all longshore work, any worker going in and out of a port is going to be subject to these rules.

ILWU deals with the issues

Before I get into the particulars, let me tell you about what the ILWU has been doing. The ILWU was the first union to deal with these issues, sending people to Congress to lobby for worker rights and protections. We testified before Congress. We met with the Secretary of Transportation and with other government officials.

The ILWU went to Washington DC in October 2001 and attended a critical meeting of organized labor which was the Transportation Trades Department. This is the group within the AFL-CIO that has the affiliates of all international unions that represents workers in transportation trades. They had no policy and no position on any of these issues until the ILWU made a formal motion and a presentation of a four-point plan for organized labor to deal with this new wave of national security.

Not all national security is illegitimate. There's a lot of critical things that need to be done to protect the people from random acts of terrorist violence. There's a lot of important security measures that need to be instituted but they cost money. To have proper screening you have to slow down commerce a little bit. To do inspections, anybody that's ever been in an airport knows things slow down in order to have that kind of security. That's the price you pay.

That's one of the points that the ILWU and organized labor has been pressing for real security, not phony security. Phony security is making great announcements about fighting terrorism wherever it may be without doing a damned thing about it. Phony security is identifying the entire American workforce as potential terrorists and treating them likewise. That's phony security.

One of the other points the ILWU proposed is to deal with this question of background checks. The ILWU and thankfully the AFL-CIO got behind a proposal to at least try and establish in writing certain basic protections in this new wave of legislation. We argued long and hard



Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) cards are being tested at the Port of Wilmington in Delaware and at Long Beach, California. The cards are part of a security system that will control access to secured areas by matching the cardholder to biometric information such as fingerprints or photographs.

in front of Congress to amend the legislation. We submitted commentaries on the legislation. We pressed, we pressed, and we pressed. The U.S.A. Patriot Act was passed four or five weeks after 9/11. It was like a bullet shooting out of a gun. It came so quickly nobody had any opportunity to do anything to change that bill and there's no protections in it whatsoever. We got our chance with the Maritime Transportation Security Act. That's the second major piece of legislation that Congress adopted. In there, it says all port workers are going to be subject to background checks and transportation security cards.

TWIC Cards

Let me talk about transportation security cards. It's called "TWIC" for Transportation Worker Identification Credential. You'll hear a lot about it because those of you who are in transportation are going to be carrying one if you want to continue to work in transportation. It's the first time the federal government is establishing a national identification system. They are in the process of setting it up right now. It's mandated by the U.S.A. Patriot Act and the Maritime Transportation Security Act.

What is the card? It's designed to give positive and proper identification of all individuals who are going in and out of secured areas. It's now being applied to railway yards, and

it's been applied to airports and airline workers and trucking. The card will be issued to all transportation workers who qualify.

What do you have to do to qualify? You have to go down to a federal government office. You have to give your fingerprints. You have to show proof of your identity. The FBI, under supervision of Attorney General John Ashcroft's office, will do a criminal background check. If the background check reveals that you have been convicted of certain felonies within the last seven years, you will be disqualified from working in secured areas and in security sensitive areas.

What's a secured area? For ports,

contain certain information about you. The card is going to be read at various physical locations within a port facility, along the transportation modes of trucking, rail and air. It will clear you to go in or not. It will also monitor and record where you're going, when you're going.

We did get some basic protections from Congress after some really hard work by a lot of good people. We have an appeal process now. People have a right to appeal if they are disqualified. You have the right to file for a waiver if you have a conviction in your record and you can show that you are rehabilitated, you're a good worker, a good citizen, or you get letters of recommendation from your employer.

We got written into the law the right of a notice for a worker that's affected by this and the right to an actual hearing. We are pressing for a legal type proceeding with basic due process so that, although the names and identities of people will be kept anonymous, the types of rulings will be public, so lawyers and organized labor can work with those rulings and make sure there's fairness, there's no discrimination, there's uniformity. The law also allows alternate security arrangements for certain individuals who don't qualify for the transportation worker identification card. What the specifics will be, we don't know. The regulations on most of this is not finalized. There's regulations that are in place for the hazardous materials, trucking industry and those regulations are pretty much going to be the model for all transportation industry modes.

Privacy rights

Privacy was another important issue that we fought hard to get into the legislation. There's now a mandate in the law that wasn't there before that says that no one, no public person, no one outside of the security background check itself is entitled to the information. The employer is specifically prohibited from using this information.

Also the government is specifically prohibited from using any of this information for any other purpose than simply being able to maintain positive identification of people going in and out of secured areas in the transportation industries.

It's not all bleak. There are some

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Ah Quon McElrath challenges conventioners—continued from page 1

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 ILWU. Fiercely dedicated to the fight for social and workplace justice, she has given nearly the last 60 years of her life in service to union members, to students, to the terminally ill who wish to die with dignity, to the community at large.

Since my talking with you in the 2000 Convention, 9/11 occurred, redefining our country's role in world politics, with its dangers to democracy. For the first few minutes, let's shoot the breeze in order to lay the background for more serious discussion of the future role of this Local in particular and the labor movement in general.

What is important as you participate in your deliberations of this convention is to try to translate the occurrences of the past and how they affect your behavior as union members and as participants in the life of the state.

Like many of your parents and grandparents, my generation were children of the depression and perhaps the first generation representing the largest cohort of American citizens born to immigrant parents.

I remember picking kiawe beans and dried bones for sale to the fertilizer company in Iwilei where the family lived; walking to school because there was not enough money for car fare; pushing my kid brother ahead of me at the old Palama Theatre because I had only enough money to buy one ticket. At least the both of us had the chance to see our favorite cowboys, Tom Mix and Hoot Gibson, beat the crooks.

I remember working during summers in the pineapple canneries beginning at the age of 13. At first it was Libby McNeill & Libby on Kalani Street bordering Waiakamilo Road. We'd rouge ourselves, wear high heels, and waved our arms wildly in a shape-up outside the cannery iron gate. Yes, the shape-up similar to the shape-up in the early days of longshoring. In that way, the manager would notice us and pick us out of the crowd for a job that paid 12-1/2 cents an hour.

Many of my generation worked while in college when tuition was only \$50 a semester and second hand books could be bought for a few dollars.

Campus jobs paid 25 cents per hour in the National Youth Administration—a federal program.

During my senior year, I had five jobs going, with a total monthly income of about \$38.00; I also cleared tables at the school cafeteria for a free lunch. Incidentally, one of your longshore officers, Yukio Abe, now long retired, used to wash the big pots and pans so he too could get a free lunch, the same time I cleared tables.

Working for money to pay for tuition, fees, and books and to

augment the family income was not unique to me. Many of my classmates—children of sugar and pineapple workers and small merchants—worked at even harder jobs than I, cutting cane, plucking coffee beans, picking pineapples and other jobs that required manual labor.

Very few of our children or grandchildren work in the fields and canneries today, if only because there are only two sugar plantations left and two pineapple companies still doing business. Instead, the youngsters now work in fast food establishments, in the retail trades, doubling as advisors in camps run by non-profit organizations, and babysitting.

UH and Unions

I remember when the president of the University of Hawaii would not allow a women's group of which I was chair to use a campus classroom because we had invited a member of the International Typographical Union to discuss the effects of the National Labor Relations Act, on Hawaiian workers. The speaker was Marshal McEuen, the local's first political action director in 1944.

I remember when members of the ROTC and the football team pelted about 50 of us with tomatoes and eggs when we peace marched in 1936 from the gate on University Avenue inscribed with the motto, Above All Nations Is Humanity.

We had our peace demonstrations even as early as the 30s and we were condemned for demonstrating for peace.

Past and future

The coming of Captain James Cook to Hawaii in 1778 changed the whole complexion of the Hawaiian communal system. Cook's arrival opened up the island kingdom to the world, with its wonders and its diseases.

In rapid succession natives became seamen and day workers; sandalwood, no longer the monopoly of the king, became a money crop for chiefs; whaling ships stopped in Hawaii for supplies and altered the whole nature of work; the first plantation on Kauai enhanced the alteration; the gold strike of 1848 brought further changes by increasing job opportunities and encouraging economic development.

The coming of the missionaries with religious and business goals in 1820 was followed by the Mahele of 1848 which made land a commodity, a necessity for the business men who saw sugar as a crop that would bring them riches. But because there were not enough Hawaiian men to do the work on plantations, the Masters & Servants Act of 1850 was enacted to allow importation of workers with 3 to 5 year contracts—\$3.00 monthly pay and augmented by the penal code covering the violation of contracts signed by laborers.

The original group of about 175 Chinese men was followed by importations of nearly 400,000 from the rest of the world up to the mid 1930s. In between the importations, there were the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 offering tariff-less export of Hawaiian sugar and which linked Pearl Harbor to the U.S. defense system to ensure its dominant role in the Pacific; and the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1882 and the denunciations of the American Federation of Labor who saw the importation of foreign labor as a threat to its power and perceived right to high paying jobs in Hawaii.

The last large importation of 6,000 Filipino workers occurred between January and June, 1946 under a special arrangement with the Department of Interior to take care of the shortage of labor caused by World War II, even though under martial law all workers in the territory were frozen to their jobs and their wages. Incidentally, all these workers while at sea were

and troublemakers.

Your ancestors were segregated into ethnic camps, the exact reason for such segregation not manifestly important except to say that they served a purpose in preserving identity of the groups, but made it difficult for all workers to compare their working conditions. At a later period segregated camps provided the clue for successful organization by the ILWU through the identification of leaders of camps who were recruited as organizers.

Your ancestors, cognizant of discrimination in job assignment and wages among the various ethnic groups, conducted many strikes; some small; others big. Examples: 1909: mainly Oahu Japanese sugar workers, but supported by neighbor island Japanese workers; 1920: Filipino-Japanese coalition strike with the first demands for maternity benefits and other women's issues; wholesale eviction of workers and death from the influenza epidemic; 1924: Kauai Filipino Strike when 18 rank and



signed up in the ILWU by union organizers through an arrangement the ILWU made with the Marine Cooks & Stewards Union.

Early workers

Let's take a look at what our great grandparents, grandparents and parents did in those earlier years of working under the Masters & Servants Act.

Before the Act, the first strike occurred on Kauai in July, 1841 at what was then known as the Koloa Sugar Co.

That year Hawaiian workers struck because the daily 12-1/2 cents they earned was paid in scrip and could only be redeemed at the company store. They wanted to be paid 25 cents a day in cash. That strike was lost, as were many others, under the guise that Hawaiian workers were the highest paid agricultural workers in the world—an assertion repeated many times since 1841. The Hawaiian workers were characterized in this way by management: "The Hawaiian can lie down and die the easiest of any people with whom I am acquainted." Shades of epithets against other ethnic workers as the yellow peril

filers and police were killed; 1937: Filipino workers strike Hawaiian Commercial Sugar Co. with legal help from the mainland-based International Labor Defense; last big ethnic strike whence came Calixto (Carl) Damaso, the second president of ILWU Local 142; 1938: Inland Boatmen's Union strike against Inter-Island Steamship Navigation Co., culminating in the August 1 Hilo Massacre when organized workers and their families gathered on the Hilo dock were attacked by the police; 1940: strike of Kauai longshore workers, resulting in massive evictions from plantation homes—workers from Lihue Plantation were offered [to remain] as sugar workers with homes or as longshoremen without homes—in the longest recorded Hawaiian strike; reflected for the first time collaboration of all ethnic groups.

During this period Jack Hall, your first regional director appointed by the International Union in 1944, organized two locals of United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing & Allied Workers of America at Kauai Pineapple Co. and McBryde Sugar Co. Hall formed the Kauai Progressive

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In history, for the future

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Relations Board have fed the anti-union tactics of employers who manipulate the nature of work to affect eligibility to vote and play on the fears of workers by threats to close the business or to move away, all unfair labor practices that are usually not upheld by the Board.

Unionists have been forced to give back benefits through higher premiums, co-payments, and deductibles in health care with fewer benefits as well as loss of dependents coverage.

Despite ERISA, employers have moved in retirement plans that cover 44 million retirees and workers to the concept of defined contributions from defined benefit, which leaves workers to the mercies of the stock market, and no certainty of benefits at the time of retirement.

Meanwhile, CEOs, like Donald Carty of American Airlines walked away with \$8.2 million payout and \$2.9 million in stock options. The list goes on with CEOs receiving \$4.1 million in Hewlett Packard, \$71 million in Tyco International involved in stock manipulations but with layoffs of over 11,000 workers; some CEOs were rewarded with average compensation packages of \$5.9 million; with paychecks 59 percent higher than the average \$3.7 million paid CEOs of 365 largest companies, and even though they represent companies with the highest numbers of worker layoffs.

At the same time, it is expected underfunded pension liabilities will double to more than \$80 billion in 2003, increasing the burden of the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp., which already has picked up payments to retirees of companies that have failed to meet their obligations in contributions.

The irony of the huge pay increases to CEOs is that they are among the one percent who benefit the most from the Bush tax cut with cuts amounting to nearly \$90,000 per year, who evade taxes by purchases of art and who come from companies with offshore subsidiaries or incorporation headquarters that avoid paying U.S. taxes.

Political Action: The malaise in voter participation resulted in the Supreme Court election of a president who lost the popular vote. A 50 percent turnout in presidential and other elections do not guarantee that democracy works in our country.

At the local level, the promise for equality, justice and progress begun half a century ago is beginning to unravel because there is no united front of labor to hold endorsed candidates, mostly Democrats, feet to the fire.

Democrats, who have generally been known to be sympathetic to the needs of working people and their families, have lost the guts to carry out the vision which they so boldly

trumpeted in 1954. The basic goal seems to be getting re-elected.

Technology: This is the touchstone of industry, not only in the manufacturing process which we have lost in large measure through NAFTA, WTO, IMF and World Bank but also in industries where service is the primary product, and which promises to insure profits and make human labor obsolete. Seattle 1999 can still be our guide as is Cancun to poor countries today.

We've had our problems—remember men and machines on the west coast in the 60s which all started with containerization and more recent problems in longshore negotiations in 2002 with the increased use of computers; remember our voluntary repatriation fund in the 50s when the sugar industry no longer needed workers because of mechanization. They paid off workers, especially those non citizen Filipinos with a lump sum to return to the Philippines.

These are tough days. There are no longer the sugar and pineapple industries when it was easy to organize workers; there are no longer



ILWU convention delegates inform the public about Pacific Beach Hotel's violation of worker rights.

the bakeries, the supermarkets, the auto companies, the hospitals, the cemeteries, the golf courses, the large hotels, whose goods and services are replaced by packaging, computers, overtime, mergers.

But there are the Costcos, the WalMarts, the Home Improvements, the Office Maxes, the other discount chains; there are still the banks, the insurance companies, the fast food chains which exist as the second and third jobs for workers struggling under the load of high rents, increased health care bills, higher utility and transportation costs.

Your job

Your job as union members is cut out for you. Here they are:

Number 1: Participation. You are the union; just as your parents, grandparents, great grandparents, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters were members and who faced the wrath of employers and the community to organize and to fight concentrated power. Your ancestors were the ones who fought the initial battles so that you can enjoy that which you have today—better living

conditions, perhaps a home, a car and other conveniences; a democratic government still devoted to civil liberties for all and with the sense of equality and justice, and despite the Patriot and Homeland Security Acts. You can't sit back and say I've got it made—because you didn't make all of it and it can be taken away from you.

All you need do to carry on that noble tradition of your ancestors to become good union members—attend all your meetings; ask questions when you are unsure; make suggestions when you think things are going wrong; an elected official who doesn't represent you and the rank and file; a worker who is not getting the attention when a grievance is filed; know your contract well so you can represent a worker on the job and when there is trouble. Belly aching is not enough.

Number 2: Organize the Unorganized. Organizing is the life blood of a trade union. Talk union and programs with your neighbors; with parents in your PTA group; with members of your church; with the players on your ball team. Tell

enacting a local law.

Number 4: Political Action.

It's tough enough for union members and their families to have to contend with the myriad of endorsements and confusing programs proposed by the numerous unions in town. Forget about egos and power; go forward with one slate of endorsed candidates—based on independent political action under the slogan of reward your friends and punish your enemies. How about a legislative program that protects and extends your rights as workers with the preservation of your contracts and the guarantee of your civil liberties, rather than a program of self-serving provisions. We did it earlier—a minimum wage law that benefited non-union workers; TDI for workers who had no sick leave; we can continue to do it for the collective welfare of all residents.

Register to vote and vote on election day; convince your families, neighbors and friends that working people can exercise their power instead of sitting back and taking it from many politicians whose sole interest lies in their being re-elected because they can't do an honest day's work.

Be on the look out for the privatizing of Social Security and Medicare. Your security in retirement belongs in your hands, not in the hands of politicians.

Number 5: Immigrant Rights.

Nearly all of us, except for the Hawaiians, are descendants of immigrants who helped to build this state and from whose ranks the leaders of this union emerged, the primary one of whom was the late Harry Bridges who founded this Union in the wake of the 1934 General strike on the West Coast.

The face of our country is ever changing. It will change because women are not having as many children as they did and because they are postponing the time when they have children. There will be a time when our country will be made up more and more of people with different colored skins, eyes and hair, just as our ancestors changed the face of Hawaii beginning with the coming of Captain Cook.

These new immigrants, many of whom are part of you, deserve and need the assistance of union members to benefit from unionization, just as your ancestors benefited from unionization. Organize them!

Number 6: Peace. Our union has worked diligently for peace, during the Korean and Vietnam Wars when it was not the popular thing to do and most recently the war in Iraq which has become a quagmire of lies, manipulations, mismanagement, misplaced priorities, and a sink hole where a requested additional \$87 billion on top of the \$1 billion spent weekly will wipe out the trillion dollar surplus of the previous administration and when health, education, housing, and the environment will take the back seat to defense.

The risks in working for peace are great; in the recent war, the fear of being tagged unpatriotic crushed

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“Harry Bridges” speaks to Local 142 Convention

By Ian Ruskin as Harry Bridges

Brothers and Sisters, Aloha. Or as I'd say on the mainland . . . Brothers and sisters, welcome. Or as I'd say back where I come from . . . good day, mates.

My name is Harry Bridges. And I know, even here, some of you are saying who the hell is the fella with the funny accent 'Cause, I'm just a working stiff, always have been and always will be.

But I was also President of this union for 40 years, from 1937 till 1977, and that's a long time to be anything, especially the President of this union.

But now I get to come out here and relax, enjoy the Aloha. No more tough negotiations for me. No more fighting for the right to have negotiations, for the right to be a union. And I want to say that there were a bunch of fellas that built the ILWU in Hawaii, and the fella that led the way was Jack Hall. I come out here if negotiations get a bit sticky, to make speeches, to meet the big shots, but Jack Hall, and a bunch of others, built the union here. Now we can march and picket and be proud. But it wasn't always like that, see?

So, “Defend Our Rights—Protect Our Union.” Now, it seems to me, and I might be wrong but I don't think so, that before you can defend your rights, you have to know what they are and where they came from.

Hawaii was different

And a hundred odd years ago Hawaii was a very different place. Here's something written by Mark Twain, the fella who wrote “Tom Sawyer” and “Huckleberry Finn” and who said “the coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco” . . . and I know what he was talking about:

“The missionaries braved a thousand privations to come and make the native permanently miserable by telling him how beautiful and blissful a place heaven is, and how nearly impossible it is to get there, and by showing him what rapture it is to work all day long for fifty cents to buy food for the next day, compared with fishing for pastime and lolling in the shade through eternal sum-

mer, and eating of the bounty provided by Nature.” Letters from the Sandwich Islands (as they were called then) 1866.

And a funny thing happened—the missionaries, or at least some of their kids and grandkids, saw converting the land to be at least as important, and a lot more profitable, than converting the natives:

“The humble New England missionaries came for the lofty purpose of teaching the native, that would be the Hawai'ian, the true religion. So well did they

succeed in this, and also in civilizing him, that by the second or third generation he was practically extinct. When Cook arrived there were 300,000 Hawai'ians living here, a 100 years later, there were 40,000 left. And for the sons and grandsons of the missionaries was the possession of the islands themselves – of the land, the ports, the town sites, and the sugar plantations.” Jack London, Honolulu, 1907.

Now, of course, you have to remember that Jack London was a bloody Socialist. I like Jack London.

No Asiatics employed

Well, by 1900 there were workers from all over the place. First, Chinese, and they came under contract. Started out at 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, for 3 to 5 years, \$3 a month. About a cent an hour. And if you ran away, you'd get 2 days added to the contract for every day you were gone.

Then from Japan, and then the Philippines, and then from all over the bloody place, see? And in 1900 they had a Labor Day parade . . . listen to this:

From the Pacific Commercial Advertiser, September 4, 1900. . .

“The Territory's First Labor Day

and Parade was the best ever seen here . . . an unqualified success. It takes the laboring man, 'the horny handed son of toil' to do things well. Labor Day of 1900 will be long remembered.”

Trouble is, it was a huge parade, this Labor Day parade, a mile and a half long, but there were only 300 union men in it, and they were all haoles. There was the White Mechanics Union, the Painters Union had a float with banners saying “no Asiatics employed.” “Asiatics”

couldn't even get into the bloody parade. That's not my idea of a good Labor Day.

It look a lot

And it took a lot to get to where we are today:

It took the Hilo Massacre, when 50 men and women were wounded, shot, by police, it took a strike in 1940 that lasted 298 days, it took living through Martial Law—and then, on the plantations, organizing at night, in church

basements pretending you were playing cards, with lookouts . . . 'cause if the plantation caught you—you were out. It took the 6,000 Filipinos, who arrived in Honolulu, not as scabs, but instead, as members of the ILWU. It took hunting and fishing and bumming parties, and a longshore strike where everyone ran out of toilet paper.

And it took dealing with the Big 5. And just how powerful were the Big 5? What did they control? Just about everything—and this is from an official report:

They controlled every business of any importance, most of the land, the banks, transportation, buying and selling of just about everything, the police, the legislature, the governor, the judges, the elections, the church, the hotels, the telephone company, the newspapers, the university, Army and Navy Intelligence, the National Guard, lawyers and prostitution.

Wiretaps and FBI

And it took dealing with the Red Menace. And this is a subject where I know what I'm talking about. I had 21 years of hearings and trials, twice to the Supreme Court, twice in prison. Though the second time, while I was inside I did read 12 books. I put on 15 pounds and I organized the guards into the Teamsters! The FBI taped my phones, bugged my hotel rooms and went through my wastepaper baskets.

And here, in the '49 longshore strike, we had the Dear Joe editorials, in the Honolulu Advertiser, written by the owner, Lorrin Thurston, who the reporters, behind

his back, called “blockhead.” Well, blockhead wrote these letters as if they were from Jack Hall to Joe Stalin:

Dear Joe,

If We Was Commies, Joe, This Is What We'd Do. We'd get unions that work ships to agree to follow us blindly—or else. We'd ask for more wages than any sensible employer could grant. Then we'd blockade all the people; bust them; give 'em just enough food to keep from starving. Come on, Joe Stalin. We've got Hawaii all set up for you. It's a pushover. (Honolulu Advertiser, May 4, 1949)

But I'll tell you something—through those 21 years, it was the Constitution of the United States that was the rock upon which the rank and file built their support of me, and that's what got me free, not the courts.

And it took dealing with the Smith Act. The Smith Act made it illegal to be a member of the Communist Party. And the question was—“are you now or have you ever been?” So Jack Hall and six other of our members were found guilty, in 1951, of joining the Party back in the '30s, when it was legal to join. The Supreme Court eventually threw that one out . . .

And anyway, by then the ILWU was here to stay. In 1944 we'd had 900 members, 2 years later we had 30,000. Now, THAT'S organizing!

And I have to say, that in '42, when the Honolulu longshoremen first came to us with the idea of organizing plantations . . . I said no, but some of the other fellas said “why the hell not” . . . so we said yes. Anyone can make a mistake.

And don't forget, we didn't just organize . . . we registered to vote—and we voted . . . and an ILWU endorsement was money in the bank for the politicians . . . and we got our money's worth, and we got our own members elected . . . cane cutters, pineapple workers, elected to the State Legislature, where they do a bloody good job. And when people say that Hawaii has the best legislation in America for working people, all working people, and it does, that's because of us, and it's something we can be damn proud of!

ILWU principles

And what about today? Well, I like to think that I don't mind speaking my mind, I like to think that I have never minded speaking my mind, no matter who didn't like it, even when it was my own rank and file . . . and God knows, there were times when you lot would chew my rear end off—but that's all right, that was my job, and ILWU elected leaders should never be scared to speak their own mind, have their say, and then debate, and then the rank and file votes, and then the leaders do their job of putting that vote into action. Because this union is built on a few principles, and I'll tell you 3 of them:

Rank and file democracy, debate,



Harry Bridges (center) with Local 142 Hawaii members at the California Labor School (San Francisco, 1946-47).

going to the mike to have your say, and the idea that an injury to one is an injury to all. In fact, in case any of you haven't taken a look at our Constitution for a while, I'm going to read the Preamble to our Constitution.

PREAMBLE – Therefore, we, who have the common objectives to advance the living standards of ourselves and our fellow workers everywhere in the world, to promote the general welfare of our nation and our communities, to banish racial and religious prejudice and discrimination, to strengthen democracy everywhere and achieve permanent peace in the world, do form ourselves into one indivisible union.

Now that's a union.

Never underestimate the ILWU

So, today I want to say a couple of things to the President of the United States.

First, never underestimate the ILWU. We are a union with a certain amount of power, and we treat that

power with respect and integrity, and we expect the same back.

And I'll tell you something—I spent 21 years with the government using the word "Communism" to scare the hell out of people and to get just exactly what the hell they wanted. And now we have that new word—"Terrorism"—to scare the hell out of people and for the government to get just exactly what the hell they want. Well, I don't buy it. You show me anyone out to get America and you've got me with you 100%, but when, last year, when we were thinking about going on strike, and the President of our union got a phone call from the head of Homeland Security telling him that a democratic strike by our members would be an act of supporting terrorism, I didn't buy it, see?

Communism, terrorism: same bloody word, see?

And it seems to me, and I might be wrong but I don't think so, that instead of looking for terrorism in American workers, we need our

President to take a look at how he has managed to lead the way to America losing 2 1/2 million jobs, to having another 1.3 million American families fall below the official poverty line of \$17,000 for a family of 4, take the biggest federal surplus in American history and, in less than 3 years, turn it into the biggest federal deficit in American history, and how that is destroying our education system, our health care, our care for seniors, our pensions, our social security . . . all the things we fought for so long . . . now, that's an act of terrorism as far as I'm concerned.

Instead, he asks Congress for Another 87 billion dollars for Iraq. Now, what else could we do with \$87 billion dollars? Well, here's 3 ideas:

1. Solve the school budget crises in every one of our communities;
2. Provide health insurance for every uninsured American child for 15 years;
3. Provide food for all 6 million of the children who will die from hunger around the world for 7 years.

No to war

Instead, we need that 87 million dollars for the war in Iraq. Except, of course, it's not a war. Neither was Korea, or Vietnam, or all the other countries we've bombed and invaded and occupied. The last time America declared war was in 1941 . . .

And what do I think about America's "police actions"? Well, here's a couple of things I've said about them: "No war in the history of the U.S. has been as much of a poor man's war as is the unofficial war in Korea." 1953.

And you can say the same thing about every war—it's the working stiffs that go out and fight and get killed, and it's the bosses of the weapons industry, the munitions industry, the shipping industry, steel, all the industries that supply a war, they're the ones that sit here and make millions . . .

"No one of any consequence . . . except those who have a stake in the war . . . says we can win in Vietnam. The logical answer would be straight-out: call it off. If you can't win, at least have the good sense to admit it to yourself, then you negotiate and try to get the best possible deal . . . with as much face saving as you can get away with."

Just like we do sometimes . . . if you know that you're going to lose a fight, you don't fight, you negotiate for the best damn deal you can get.

And another thing . . . the idea that we make money out of war.

" . . . lose a few hours work if that's the price you pay (for peace)? . . . We as a union have always lived up to the principle that we simply will not buy our (job) security with people's lives. We never have. And we won't start now". 1965.

Defend America

And like I said before, you show us a threat to America and you've got us 100%. In World War II we signed a no-strike pledge, we worked with the Army and Navy, we worked through the war without pay increases, and we knew that the ship owners were making millions out of the war, but we did it anyway, as good Americans. And we'll do it anytime we see America under threat. I just didn't happen to see Korea, or Vietnam, or half of Central America, or Chile, or Haiti, or a bunch of others threatening America. I didn't see Afghanistan threatening America, and I don't see Iraq threatening us either. Threatening our oil supply, yes, threatening us, no.

Interfere in the foreign policy of our country? Sure as hell, that's our job, that's our right, that's our privilege, that's our duty. Foreign policy is too damned important to be left to the striped pants set in Washington DC.

Attack on civil liberties

Now, one last thing, then I'll sit down and shut up. My 21 years of hearings and trials was one long attack on my civil liberties. And

there were plenty of others got the same thing. But like I said, I had my phones tapped, my hotel rooms bugged and I was followed when I went down a hotel corridor to the bathroom. All because the government decided that I might be a threat to them, not because of anything I had done . . . except of course, be a member of a damn fine union.

Well, today, they've got a whole lot of new ways to follow you down a corridor—from satellites, for a start. And a lot of new laws giving them rights to find out just about every damn thing they want to know about you. And the right to throw you in jail without charges and without lawyers for as long as they want.

And I studied the Constitution for 21 years, after all, it saved my skin, and I think that I know it pretty well, and as far as I'm concerned, some of the things going on now, they're not only against the spirit of the Constitution, they're against the letter of it.

And, maybe worst of all, they put out this idea that only the people who support all this are patriots. Are true Americans. Well, I tell you, President Bush, that I think you've forgotten that this country was founded by a bunch of revolutionaries who said "to hell with the King and to hell with England, we want a country of the people and for the people and by the people." And, President Bush, you need to remember that we still do.

Brothers and Sisters, Mahalo.



Harry Bridges (third from right) at the signing of the 1956 Hawaii longshore contract.

Important Notice on ILWU Political Action Fund

Delegates to the 30th Convention of the ILWU, meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, April 7-11, 1997, amended Article X of the International Constitution to read:

"SECTION 2. The International shall establish a Political Action Fund which shall consist exclusively of voluntary contributions. The union will not favor or disadvantage any member because of the amount of his/her contribution or the decision not to contribute. In no case will a member be required to pay more than his/her pro rata share of the union's collective bargaining expenses. Reports on the status of the fund and the uses to which the voluntary contributions of the members are put will be made to the International Executive Board.

"The voluntary contributions to the Political Action Fund shall be collected as follows:

"Up to One Dollar and Fifty Cents (\$1.50) of each March and July's per capita payment to the International Union shall be diverted to the Political Action Fund where it will be used in connection with federal, state and local elections. These deductions are suggestions only, and individual members are free to contribute more or less than that guideline suggests. The diverted funds will be contributed only on behalf of those members who voluntarily permit that portion of their per capita payment to be used for that purpose. The Titled Officers may suspend either or both diversions if, in their judgement, the financial condition of the International warrants suspension.

"For three consecutive months prior to each diversion each dues paying member of the union shall be advised of his/her right to withhold the contribution or any portion thereof otherwise made in March and July. Those members expressing such a desire, on a form provided by the International Union, shall be sent a check in the amount of the contribution or less if they so desire, in advance of the member making his/her dues payment to the local union for the month in which the diversion occurs.

"Those members who do not wish to have any portion of their per capita payment diverted to the Political Action Fund, but wish to make political contributions directly to either the Political Action Fund or their local union, may do so in any amounts whenever they wish."

No contribution - I do not wish to contribute to the ILWU Political Action Fund. I understand that the International will send me a check in the amount of \$1.50 prior to December 1, 2003.

Less than \$1.50 - I do not wish to contribute the entire \$1.50 to the ILWU Political Action Fund. I will contribute _____. I understand that the International will send me a check for the difference between my contribution and \$1.50 prior to December 1, 2003.

More than \$1.50 - I wish to contribute more than the minimum voluntary contribution of \$1.50 to the ILWU Political Action Fund. Enclosed please find my check for \$_____.

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

Local # _____

Unit # _____

Return to: ILWU, 1188 Franklin Street • San Francisco, CA 94109

NOTE: CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NOT DEDUCTIBLE AS CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Real, not phony security needed—Remar, continued from page 2

good provisions here that protect transportation workers, that protect the communities around the ports and rail hubs, airports and that protect the nation as well from terrorism.

There is a requirement that the employers are finally going to have to start increasing their inspections of cargo and containerized cargo. For example, employers are going to have to do a regular inspection of all seals on containers, which was another point of the ILWU position that got adopted. Every container that comes into and out of a facility, or on to or off of a vessel, has to be checked for the integrity of the seal.

The new laws also require regular inventory updates—to have people going in and out of the yards continually doing inventory updates. Now these last two things that I mentioned—seal inspection and inventory updates—this is going to improve security. It's also going to provide for more work opportunities for workers, especially clerks that are working in longshore industries. It will also provide more opportunity in terms of documentation for people in the office clerical support and data support parts of the transportation industries. The new law requires affirmatively training for workers.

Until we came up with the idea and pressed them, there was nothing about evacuation. You're talking about all this potential terrorism and security, what about the idea of having a plan that the employers are required to share with workers and train them about how the heck to get out of a facility if there is an incident. How about requiring that? What about something better—how about requiring worker input in how to make their jobs safe? What about the notion of not just having workers subject to this but if you're going to institute this new regime of security, have it for everybody including management. It also requires inspection of people, cars and other items

coming in and out of these facilities at any time for any reason without probable cause, so be forewarned.

Labor rights

How does all of this impact labor rights? There are some good and bad in terms of labor rights here. The Coast Guard regulations specifically state that access to these facilities by union representatives is "encouraged". That's the word they use. Throughout the regulations and in the notice it talks about the positive role that labor can play and even identifies organized labor as a "stake-holder" that has a legitimate interest in dealing with these industries. Union representatives are going to be subject to the same requirements. If you don't have a "TWIC" identification card then you're not going to be allowed access without an escort.

There's all sorts of issues about how these new security measures are going to change working conditions more directly for workers and unions. Every employer that's affected in the transportation industry has to develop and submit for approval to the government a security plan that contains all sorts of items in there, but each plan can be different according to the circumstances of the facility. What the employer puts in that plan may be in conflict with the collective bargaining agreement. So there're real dangers of unilateral changes being made by employers. There is a huge, huge risk that economic action, collective concerted action such as strikes, slow-downs, work by rule, safety programs, may be coming to the point where they're outlawed.

Here's some of the language that they use for supporting the security provisions and why they're doing what they're doing. First, it's important to remember that with these transportation cards you have to pass a background test and if you have certain felonies you're disquali-

fied. In addition to the felonies, if you're also considered by the government to be a security risk, they can deny you the card. There's no specifics or criteria on how the government determines who is a security risk. Is someone who disrupts commerce a security risk? Is someone who organizes a strike a security risk? Is someone who's picketing and slowing down the flow of cargo a security risk? The law says people can be disqualified for engaging in a severe transportation security incident which is defined as, "an incident resulting in a significant loss of life, environmental damage, transportation system disruption, or economic disruption in a particular area." So they're now identifying for security purposes any kind of economic disruption to the transportation system of the nation and the world.

They even get more clear and more specific to the ILWU. In the regulations that were issued in July of this year for the Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration which are now departments of Homeland Security, they identified last year's West Coast ILWU labor struggle as being part of the analysis of security for the ports and for transportation. Here's some of the highlights of what they said—"Maritime commerce is the lifeblood of the modern U.S. trade-based economy, touching virtually every sector of our daily business and personal activities . . . The macroeconomics effects of the recent shutdown of West Coast ports, while not in response to a security threat, are a good example of the economic costs that we could experience when a threat would necessitate broad-based port closures."

Then they talk about certain "war games" that have been played by business and government agencies using a terrorist threat as a hypothetical situation to anticipate. I don't remember getting a notice about being asked to participate in the war game. I don't think any of you did either. But believe me your employers in the transportation industry did. Here's the zinger. Here's their closure on why they are bringing up a labor dispute with regard to national security and anti-terrorism measures. They close this by saying, "Regardless, the economic hardship suffered by industry, labor, and the loss of public welfare due to a sustained nationwide port shutdown may have as significant an effect on the U.S. as the act of terror itself."

I just want to repeat that concept because it's like a mathematical formula here. The idea that an economic shutdown or disruption has the same effect as an act of terrorism. The law doesn't specifically nail this down but it's chilling, chilling stuff here. It could get worse. There's a piece of this legislation that had all sorts of criminal provisions in it, that made it a crime to engage in acts of terrorism and disruption of any part of the transportation system. It punished offenders by life in prison

and the death penalty.

Congress is really big on the death penalty now for just about everything, especially in the drug war. Very big on that. It uses these same terms. That's the problem. A major economic disruption could be a crime. We fought like hell to get that out and we succeeded, but like monsters always tend to do, it's been resurrected. It's coming back. There's pieces of legislation that are percolating in Congress right now that could be very repressive if organized labor uses any economic action in these areas. I know that a lot of you are not in the transportation industry, but what goes for one so goes for the rest eventually. At least that seems to be the tendency throughout history. It doesn't have to go that way. We have to fight it.

What can we do?

You have to know your rights. You have to get up on the law. You have to know what these regulations are. You got to know what's coming down as well. You have to monitor and enforce. There are certain security provisions which are good, which will help provide real protection and which will also allow for extra work opportunity. It's going to cost the employers money and they're going to try and slither out of it whenever and wherever they can and we've got to be on top of these things.

You have to be familiar with these port security plans. Get in your employer's face and find out what's going on with these plans and make damned sure that they negotiate with the union and with the workers before any changes are made that may affect working terms and conditions. The law requires local port security committees be established. Most of them already are in existence in virtually all ports. The law does not require that union representatives be included on these committees, but it recommends that they be included. We're pushing hard for an actual mandate. In the meantime the experience seems to be that where local unions are active and are assertive, they get on these committees and then you know what's happening and you're able to monitor and you're able to influence where all of this goes. It's critically important to do that at the local level.

It's also important on the local and national level to continue the lobbying effort that the ILWU started in terms of dealing with potential port security issues.

Editors note: the full text of the final National Maritime Security rules published by the Coast Guard on October 22, 2003 can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2003/03-26345.htm>

[Federal Register: October 22, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 204)] [Rules and Regulations] [Page 60447-60472] From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov] [DOCID:fr22oc03-11]

Will you do it?—McElrath, continued from page 5

clear thinking and made cowards of many of us.

Peace, in light of the Bush principle of preemptive action, remains paramount. We can ill afford adventures in Iran, North Korea and other countries in our role as the world's policeman intent on realizing the dreams of empire, as codified in the 2002 new "National Security Strategy of the United States of America".

The challenges facing all of us are many and daunting. You may well ask "What's in it for me; what can little old me do?"

There's a lot you can do; in concert with other working people, with all the mothers and fathers and children of this world in international solidarity we can live in peace, with enough food to eat, enough water to drink, not incidentally, the bottled water which has become a major money-making adventure for water companies when water should be

free; you can all hide the bottled water that you now have, health care when needed; education for children.

Will you do your part with other workers and families in Hawaii, in the United States, in the rest of the world.

Will you add zest and zing to your lives; are you willing to become a leader; are you willing to turn that kaleidoscope around and be challenged by the different views the shards provide with each turn.

Are you willing to carry the torch your ancestors lit for unions, still the only social organization in whose hands workers can manage to control the conditions of work which defines you and all other workers who produce the goods and services, the art and music, the literature and dance which nourish the human spirit and mind in freedom and love and with equality and justice.

Will you do it?