

Yet, another example of thinking like the bosses is what happened to the Office Clerical Unit strikes in LA/LB. We organized these workers into our clerk locals. They set up picket lines when contract negotiations broke down. At first longshoremen honored the picket lines, but when the arbitrator decided for the employer that the pickets were not bona fide, they were ordered to cross our own union brothers and sisters' picket line. You can't read about it in *The Dispatcher* but it's in the local newspapers. What a shame that our union paper has become a rag. Some ILWU members seem to think our union is a job trust for them to get the best jobs all the time. In fact, strikers were martyred in the '34 Big Strike in the fight of all maritime workers for the union hall to share the work.

In 1988, two Coast decisions directly affected the outcome of this Longview struggle. The Coast Labor Relations Committee meeting minutes of March 3, 1988 concerned our jurisdiction in Pittsburg, California. New cranes were being used at the USS-POSCO steel facility and ILWU wanted to make sure they were ILWU crane operators. We shut down all ports in Northern California using our contractual right to a stop work meeting and marched 12,000-strong on the plant along with our Warehouse and Marine Divisions and other workers. The Joint CLRC agreed that we had a contractual right (Sec. 12) to hold a stop work meeting and to protest. We successfully defended our jurisdiction.

By Caucus action we used the stop work meeting provision again in 1999 to close all ports on the Coast and participate in a march of 25,000 where we demanded freedom for black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. When we need to shut it down there's more than one way to flex our muscle.

Second, an ominous arbitration (C-8-88) regarded a notorious PMA official from the Columbia River Area by the name of Leal Sundet who wanted to register as a longshoreman. The arbitrator ruled in his favor and we're suffering the consequences of that decision today as this former PMA honcho now sitting as ILWU Coast Committeeman from the Northwest makes decisions in favor of the employer (EGT and TWIC). EGT was his responsibility from the beginning two years ago. Longview should've been a clear cut victory. Militant mass actions by longshoremen, backed up by other unions and Occupy showed our power. Unlike the USS-POSCO beef, the ILWU tops never used our power when it was so desperately needed.

Here's the proof:

- 1) The first mistake was not to support the construction unions who were picketing against the use of non-union labor to build the new EGT terminal 2 years ago. International officers were asleep at the switch, a "no show" from the beginning. No job actions on the Coast, as promised by these officers, were organized against the ships of STX Pan Ocean, one of the companies that owns EGT.
- 2) Funds for Local 21's picketing were not forthcoming from the International unless they towed the "top down" legalistic line, even as temperatures dipped below freezing. This sounded much like how then-ILA President Bowers treated the Charleston longshoremen in their struggle 12 years ago. So, Local 10 invited Local 21 officers to our union meetings and donated \$10,000 so they could afford more picket signs, tents and propane gas for heat in the freezing weather. Presi-

dent Coffman spoke at the Local 10 membership meeting in November to thank the Local for its solidarity and donations.

- 3) The democratic will of the membership of the Longshore Division was not heard. The International and Coast Committee denied Local 21 President Dan Coffman's call for a dual area meeting of Northwest locals and Local 10's call a special Caucus to organize a plan of action against EGT.
- 4) If there was a "secret plan" by the union tops, no one ever saw it implemented. As one president of a small Northwest port local said: "I've never seen such secret negotiations like this before." Another old-timer familiar with grain negotiations said: "We get no information or misinformation. This is worse than Peavey."
- 5) The reading of President McEllrath's letter of Jan. 3 was the excuse given by ILWU bureaucrats for disrupting the Portland and Seattle solidarity meetings of Jan. 5 and 6. But his letter only cursorily called for a protest against the scab ship. Its main purpose was to bow to NLRB's anti-labor laws like Taft-Hartley which he mentioned numerous times, meaning protesters were to obey police and military commands. Occupy refers to many labor organizations as "Taft-Hartley unions" and for good reason. If we had followed police and National Guards' dictates in 1934 and 1948, ILWU wouldn't be a union today.

When you read the contract with its endless clauses leaving one thing after another up to the "sole discretion of the Employer", it becomes clear why the ILWU misleaders were so hot to prevent any action that would violate Taft-Hartley. They're playing the port bosses' game—and we, longshoremen will pay the price. With their business unionists' thinking, they would turn the ILWU into a labor contractor for PMA.

Concessionary contracts cannot be called a victory. The effects of the Local 21-EGT agreement will be seen in the upcoming September Grainhandlers' negotiations which directly impact three grain elevators in Portland, one in Vancouver, WA, and one each in Seattle and Tacoma – and 2014 PCLCD negotiations. Stay tuned. Keep your powder dry.

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**Read the ILWU agreement with EGT for yourself at the web site of the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee: <http://www.transportworkers.org>**



a rank and file newsletter for maritime workers

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A Huge Struggle ... And Then a Concessionary Contract

## LONGVIEW: Snatching Defeat From The Jaws Of Victory

Longview Local 21 longshore workers waged the biggest, boldest battle against union-busting in the U.S. in decades. It was a fight against EGT, the giant grain company, that refused to abide by the port agreement to hire ILWU longshoremen, a conflict for ILWU jurisdiction and a contract. We kept our jurisdiction but got shackled with the worst concessionary contract ever. No wonder the contract, negotiated by attorneys, hasn't been voted on by the membership. For a month it's been the best kept secret (by EGT and ILWU tops) on the West Coast waterfront, where scuttlebutt is usually free flowing. MWM just got a copy of the contract. Let the Local 21 membership read it and decide. That's their right. And it's all longshore workers' right to see it because it affects the whole Coast, not just for upcoming grain negotiations but the PCLCD in 2014. *A Longshore Caucus must be called over this sellout.*

What brought the arrogant CEO Larry Clarke of EGT to the table was a planned mass mobilization ready to stop the first grain ship at all cost at the new EGT terminal in the port of Longview, Washington in early February. Lines in this class war were drawn. On the workers' side was the ILWU, organized labor and their allies in the Occupy move-



Dawn Des Brisay

**Longview: longshoremen fight for jobs, defying police repression. Militant action like this inspired workers across the country and internationally.**

ment organizing caravans to converge from the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle and Portland. On the other side of the barricades were EGT, the police, the Coast Guard, the scabs in Operating Engineers 701, the courts and the state.

Governor Chris Gregoire stepped in, fearful of a repeat of the September 8 action when longshore workers from Northwest ports marched on the scab EGT facility. They were exercising their First Amendment rights, protesting the police attack on ILWU International President McEllrath and hundreds of picketing longshoremen the previous day who had blocked a grain train. Cargo hooks were left hanging in the ports of Seat-

tle, Portland and Tacoma while longshoremen took care of union business in the port of Longview. ***That's the power of the ILWU, to shut down global shipping! Just before the ship's arrival when we were ready for action ILWU negotiators should've demanded the standard Northwest Grain-handlers' Agreement.***

On Feb. 6, the grain ship Full Sources was escorted down the Columbia River to the EGT dock by armed Coast Guard cutters and helicopters. The ILWU struggle had galvanized enthusiastic support from working people around the country and even internationally. So, on Jan. 23, Governor Gregoire brokered a deal between EGT and ILWU on legal issues around hiring and the union hiring hall. The rank and file approved it the next day, though they never saw what they had voted on. In fact, that agreement explicitly abandoned the legal requirement that EGT use union labor! Were the ranks informed of that? Union tops claimed it gave them authorization to negotiate a contract. To date a contract has not been ratified by ILWU Local 21 members. Few longshore workers have even seen the contract. So we're making it available at [www.transportworkers.org](http://www.transportworkers.org). You and your partner should read it.

Credit for getting the grain giant to the bargaining table goes to the rank and file of Local 21 Longview whose militant actions stopped grain trains, briefly occupied the EGT facility and highlighted solidarity rallies. The union was hit with fines totaling over \$300,000 and heavy legal expenses. The Coast Guard threatened to pull picketers' TWIC cards, the port security ID which allows workers onto the marine terminals. Felony charges continue to mount even after the settlement. Why is there no amnesty? We've always demanded no reprisals at the end of every contract negotiations. Their heroic actions defied not only the federal judge who cried he was being treated like a "paper tiger" but also the International ILWU officials who insisted on top down control of the struggle. Running scared, they ordered longshoremen not to take any more militant actions or to participate in labor solidarity rallies. They threatened to withhold paying fines and legal fees totaling over \$1,000,000 for Local 21 and its 220 members.

At the instructions of his executive committee, Local 21 President Dan Coffman spoke at a Jan. 5 solidarity rally organized by Occupy at the SEIU hall in Portland. When Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet heard about it, he pulled pickets at EGT gates from other Columbia River locals, dangerously leaving Local 21 members and retirees to picket alone. The next day in Seattle, an Occupy-organized solidarity rally was disrupted by ILWU pie cards. Then, the



**Port of Oakland shut down in protest over police attack on Occupy encampment, and in solidarity with Longview longshore, November 2.**

International officers called a "presidents' meeting"--though there is no ILWU Caucus or Constitutional provision for such a decision-making body --where Coffman and Local 21 officers were targeted for a vicious bloodletting. Unable to defend themselves against this lynch mob, while Local 10 Executive Board members Clarence Thomas and Marcus Holder, who have been active supporters of the Longview struggle, were excluded, Local 21 capitulated. *The Dispatcher* called it a "unifying" meeting!

The militant 30,000-strong Nov. 2 Oakland port shutdown organized by Occupy Oakland frightened the union bureaucrats and EGT. It was called to protest the brutal police attack on the Occupy encampment, in which Iraq war vet, Scott Olsen, was nearly killed, and in solidarity with the Longview struggle. It was supported by the ranks of Local 21 and Local 10. None of the ILWU tops had organized militant, mass job actions before. They should have been organizing job actions against STX Pan Ocean ships and port shutdowns protesting EGT union-busting. Instead Occupy activists took action, substituting themselves for the union, but inspiring ILWU longshoremen to take action. That's what had the union tops running scared.

Perhaps, even more important was the Dec. 12 coast-wise action called by the Occupy Wall Street movement. Despite attempts by President McEllrath, Coast Committeeman Sundet and some local ILWU presidents who directed members to cross Occupy picket lines, longshoremen honored Occupy picket lines in Seattle, Portland, Longview and Oakland. ***In the best tradition of the ILWU's proud record, it was a defiant rank and file, the Local 10-initiated call for caravans to "meet" the scab ship, supported by Labor Councils in California and Washington, and the Occupy movement that gave Washington Governor Gregoire and EGT's Larry Clarke cause for concern, and rightfully so.***



**Longview ILWU workers applauded at solidarity rally for Local 21 organized by Occupy at Seattle Labor Temple, Jan. 6. The rally was later disrupted by ILWU bureaucrats as part of attempt to stop coastwise solidarity action.**

### THE EGT CONTRACT: WHAT WE GOT AND WHAT WE LOST

- We got waterfront jurisdiction for longshore both on the ship and shoreside, but none for ship clerks. Why not? Clerks Local 40 had been picketing from day one. Operating Engineers Local 701 scabs were supposedly given the boot, but some non-ILWU mechanics and a clean up crew have been in EGT doing our work.
- It bypasses the union hiring hall dispatch procedure by allowing EGT to hire a select pool of steady "pre-qualified" workers, in other words a separate "company" board. This is exactly what the anti-union National Right to Work Committee has been lobbying for in Congress to destroy the union hiring hall.
- For the first time in the ILWU Longshore Division, the Taft-Hartley Act has been codified into a contract. ILWU has a proud history of fighting the slave labor Taft-Hartley Act, intended to destroy the union hiring hall and militant union actions. The only penalty employers have been able to assess against our union for job actions or so-called "illegal work stoppages" is denial of PGP. Every ILWU president from Harry Bridges on has opposed Taft-Hartley. McEllrath is the first to embrace it. This danger opens the door to much more serious attacks..
- The control room will be run by management, not ILWU. This is the key to grain cargo loading. It's like us having dock and ship jobs on a ship but not the crane operator job.
- *During work stoppages* like bona fide picket lines, standing by on health and safety, union meetings and Bloody Thursday, the contract agrees that *management*

sions gone for new members! Now, Longview longshore workers face massive fines and daily police retaliation, the union must demand "No Reprisals! Drop the charges!" *Coast Committeeman Sundet is quoted as saying "The ILWU contract with EGT is key to standardization of the grain export industry on the West Coast, particularly with respect to labor costs." HELL NO!*

These negotiations are symptomatic of a disease that has hit the West Coast waterfront. It's greedy job trusting. It's a threat to the ILWU unity, setting one group of workers against another. The ILWU's 10 Guiding Principle warns against this. We see it in the infighting in Local 13 and Local 10, where steady crane operators monopolize the highest paid skilled work and allow the employer to shift them to the yard to knock hall men out of work. With the economy on the ropes and fewer jobs to be had it's incumbent on our union to share the available work and end the steady man system.

Another example is the port truckers who sporadically have organized strikes to seek union recognition. They're fighting the same maritime employers we have. It's our obligation to support these low paid mostly immigrant workers in their fight to unionize. If they choose to affiliate with ILWU so much the better, but some of our union officials have tried in the past to cut deals with maritime companies behind the truckers' back to take that work away from the truckers and hand it over to ILWU. It's the same job trusting.

That drayage work has been around for years. Deregulation knocked the Teamsters out of the ports 20 years ago. In Seattle, inspired by the port shutdowns in support of the Longview longshoremen, port truckers organized rallies. ILWU should be helping the truckers organize into a union. Let's fight together against the port bosses! Make the waterfront 100% union! Same struggle same fight!

*will do our work on the ship or on the dock! NO WAY!*

- Negotiators did not demand union tugs do the ship docking or union construction workers do the work at EGT. IBU-manned boats had solidly refused to dock any scab grain ships during the dispute, forcing EGT to order tugs from the Gulf of Mexico.
- At EGT the select pool of hatchtenders are required to work 12 hour shifts. (All 12 hrs. with a one hour break and shifts can be extended to 13 hours to finish a vessel. EGT can work you 6 hours before a meal, then back to work for another 6 hours.)

The ILWU's newspaper, *The Dispatcher*, has called this a "significant victory". But the editor Craig Merrillees called the 2010 Boron lockout settlement a "victory" with scabs still in the mine, seniority shredded and defined pen-

